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Faculty of Arts and Languages
Department of Arts and English

THE EVOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN WAY OF WAR: FROM VIETNAM TO THE BALKANS

Thesis Submitted to the Department of Arts and Languages
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Submitted by:
Mrs ASSIA SEHILI

Supervised by:
Dr. SALIM KERBOUA

Board of Examiners:

Chairman:	**Prof. Riad Belouahem**	University of Frères Mentouri – Constantine 1
Supervisor:	**Dr. Salim Kerboua**	University of Mohamed Khider - Biskra
Examiner:	**Prof. Youcef Beghoul**	University of Frères Mentouri – Constantine 1
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Examiner:	**Dr. Samih Azoui**	ENS Assia Djabar-Constantine
Examiner:	**Dr. Fatima Hamadouche**	University of Frères Mentouri –Constantine 1

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DEDICATION

To my brother Samir.

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ABSTRACT

In the United States of America, a specific strategic culture gradually gave birth to a way of war that was quick, decisive and that had to always end in crushing victories. This absolutist mindset was born out of the marriage of bellicosity and republicanism. A country that made use of war all along its history for a variety of purposes had to constantly find a way to balance the need to use force against a republican culture that abhors casualties. The ambivalence led to the apoliticism of the military and a rupture between war and politics. The present research, through a qualitative approach, probes into the fact that although this way of war successfully accompanied the growth of the United States into a world hegemon with unparalleled global reach, it eventually became problematic with regard to its utility when faced with situations where the use of overwhelming force was inconceivable. Failure in Vietnam in the 1960's was *the* crisis, which ultimately triggered a process of military transformations that, in turn, engendered a new way of war. The lingering conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990's were the context within which this new way of war was tested. The way the United States responded to the crises does suggest that the evolution of the American way of war still failed to utterly, effectively and decisively address the issue of the political utility of force. This means that constant patterns do persist and do highlight continuity rather than change. The patterns reflect a deeply rooted dysfunction that ultimately reveals itself in the way the United States of America makes war. Despite its unmatched military prowess and an empire of military infrastructure that spans the globe, there seems to be an inability to extract proportionate political utility from the use of this formidable force and to translate American immediate military victories, when obtained, into long-term strategic successes.

Keywords: evolution; political utility of force; way of war.

List of Acronyms

AVF	All-Volunteer Force
CEP	Circular Error Probable
C^3I	Control, Command, Communication and Information
EC	European Community
ET	Emerging Technologies
FID	Foreign International Defence
GLCM	Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles
H. Bomb	Hydrogen Bomb
INCB	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
MAD	Mutual Assured Destruction
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NLF	National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (Viet Cong)
NSC-68	National Security Council Report number 68
PGM	Precision Guided Munition
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RTS	Radio Television of Serbia
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
WWI	First World War
WWII	Second World War

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INTRODUCTION

1. Research Background

Ever since Cain murdered Abel, the killing genes have been seemingly firmly established in our human DNA. Killing has then become an instrument of all types of illegitimate aggression, but it has also become the justified tool of defence of one's life, family, home, tribe and then state against that same aggression. Killing was also the way for many to defend or spread an idea. It gradually but surely became an integral component of how man relates with another man. With the growth of humanity, and the emergence of exclusively distinct groups, mutual mass killing and destruction came to be known as war and to prevent this extreme type of violence from becoming a source of anarchy, it was institutionalised and legitimised as a prerogative of states. Armies were raised, soldiers professionalised and war became an essential tool to safeguard a state's interest.

Si vis pacem, para bellum, said Roman author Vegetius as early as the fifth century in his treatise *De re military*[1] ; "if you want peace, prepare for war." Plato conveyed the same idea earlier in his work *Laws*, a classic of political philosophy. Originally, the saying meant that for the conditions of peace to be preserved, there had to be readiness to make war. This saying came to be used later on to mean using force to sustain peace, a dichotomy that became the hub around which the principle of balance of power turns. Power politics became the means to guard peace. Pax[2] Romania, Pax Britannica and, ultimately, Pax Americana were its major manifestations.

[1] *On Military Matters*

[2] Pax, in this context, means a period of general stability in international affairs under the influence of a dominant military power —usually used in combination with a Latinised name.

While Rome and Britain were genuine empires that conceitedly imposed their will at the barrel of the gun, the United States of America, while ostensibly undertaking a similar grandiose goal of international peace, has constantly been stumbling with regard to the use of its formidable military might. Assuming to be quintessentially different from those age-old empires and from the prevailing European power politics, America has adopted a seemingly unique conception of the use of force that in turn has engendered an exclusively typical way of war.

Through war, the thirteen British colonies, heirs of a long British tradition of bellicose imperialism, set themselves free from the very empire that created them. The American Revolution (1776-1783) was America's first big war, fought and won against the world's mightiest empire. It set the path for the use of military force to obtain political objectives. War was then used – whenever necessary – against the competing European empires and the original inhabitants in North America for the sake of aggrandizing the territory of the original states. The industrial north then waged war against an exclusively agrarian south to bring it back under federal rule. The Civil War (1861-1865) was America's first industrialised war and it inaugurated an era where a typical paradigm would guide the way America goes to war.

The use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to close the Second World War firmly established the position of the United States of America as a great power with an unprecedented military might. From the 1940's onwards, what Washington decided to do or not to do would have a great influence on peoples and countries around the globe. A war machine then endowed with a nuclear arsenal became a source of both awe and reassurance, depending on where each government decided to stand, before it ultimately became balanced by the Soviet's own nuclear bomb. During the whole period of the Cold War, although not a single battle directly confronted the United States and the Soviet Union; constant military build-up became the major

component of an increasingly militarised foreign policy. Proxy wars were the ground upon which the trial of strength of each of the two military giants took place.

2. Research Problem and Questions

Until the Cold War, the paradigm underlining the way America used to make war seemed to perfectly match both the republic's perception of war and the goals that same war was meant to reach. Every time force was used within the frames of the established paradigm, despite its brutally annihilating nature, both military victories and strategic goals were obtained. The American South, later Germany, and then Japan were all defeated and subsequently rebuilt and developed. Yet, the Cold War's balance of terror set off a series of severe tests to the then firmly established American way of war together with a long arduous process of transformation that would all culminate in America's War on Terror; the latter being nothing more than the ultimate manifestation of a new way of war the origins of which go back to Vietnam.

Being the world's mightiest power, any decision the United States takes to use its military force to intervene in a foreign country for whatever reason has both immediate and long-term impacts on the overall region where the intervention takes place. For better or worse, the impact is often of global importance as well. In most cases, the effect of US military interventions in the post-Cold War seems dramatically chaotic. Far beyond the immediate military victories obtained by the Pentagon, the political goal for which force was supposed to be used, is completely lost from the sight once hostilities begin. Proclaiming to be building a new world order and to be responsible for its safety, or asserting to be making the world safe for democracy and human rights, use of force has constantly been justified and resorted to, but has never managed to honour its strategic dimensions.

If we assume that there actually is a typical classical American way of war then it is worth noting that it successfully accompanied the growth of the United States into a world hegemon with unparalleled global reach. This way of war also managed to keep the country unified and to end two world wars. Eventually this way of war became problematic with regard to the utility of force during and then in the aftermath of the Cold War. Every time a crisis arose, and adjustments to that way of war were made, the new version proved problematic as well. This suggests that despite those amendments that seemingly gave birth to a new American way of war, constant patterns do persist and do highlight continuity rather than change. The patterns reflect a deeply rooted dysfunction that ultimately reveals itself in the way the United States of America makes war. Despite its unmatched military prowess and an empire of military infrastructure that spans the globe, there seems to be an inability to translate American immediate military victories into long-term strategic successes.

In an attempt to explore and then analyse both change and continuity in the way America makes war, the present thesis endeavours to answer the following main research question:

- how far has the gradual evolution and transformation of the American way of war been effective in addressing the seemingly persisting political issue of the utility of force?

The thesis also probes into a set of secondary and intrinsically relating questions that help detect and understand both the process of evolution and the constant patterns:

- what is the American way of war and how did it originate?

- why did this American way of war have to transform into a newer version in the first place? Was it a mere adaptation to the exigencies of an evolving, ever changing world environment, or was it rather a reflection of basic foundational dysfunctions? Has the so-called American way of war per

se become defective or is it rather a mere echo of a persisting strategic pattern that can be traced back to the foundations of the republic? What can the United States do to address the flaws that seem to have become a faithful companion of its war making?

3. Research Aims

This thesis aims to investigate and apprehend the persistence of a strategic crisis that significantly handicaps the extraction of maximum utility from the use of force, despite the many revisions and innovations that the American way of war underwent. It highlights the importance and the scope of military strategy as an important component of national strategy and evaluates US understanding of the proper role of war, which is the continuation of, rather than an alternative to, politics.

4. Methodology

To do so, this research makes use of a qualitative approach. It relies on the use of key concepts and key notions and on a close observation of the American way of war in practice. It focuses on carefully selected samples and relies on an alert reading of the major documents and speeches concerned with war making in the United States of America. It also makes use of memoires and reports written by public officials, military officers and various witnesses who participated in one way or another in the sample events chosen. It explores the wide array of dimensions influencing the way Americans think of and apply war. Besides, it attempts to find out the why and explain the how for the sake of a deep and comprehensive understanding of the manner in which the classical American Way of war gave way to a new way of war. The thesis traces back some major episodes of the military history of the Unites States of America since the

colonial era to the 1990's in an attempt to study, comprehend and interpret American military behaviour with the purpose of delineating change and detecting continuity.

5. Literature Review

In addition to the many valuable and available primary sources directly connected to the American way of war, much has also been written about the topic. *On War and Military Strategy*, written by Prussian general and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), during and after the Napoleonic wars (1816-1830), is an authoritative reference in the field of military strategy. The unfinished book, despite the few contradictions it contains, develops a sophisticated theory of war that remains relevant to this day. Its focus on the idea that war is an instrument of policy and on the exigencies of the nature of warfare being inherently foggy and prone to friction, has been used as a foundation for many research works in the field. Almost every piece of research that tackles the strategic crisis of the utility of force makes use of Clausewitzean theory of war as a primary premise or as a concern of study per se. A more specific approach to warfare has been developed by military historian Russell F. Weigley. Weigley was the first to popularise the use of the phrase "American way of war" in his 1973 book titled *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. The book closely examines how key U.S military and political figures, from George Washington to Robert McNamara thought about and practiced war starting from the American Revolution until Korea. The book comes up with the conclusion that a specifically American Way of War, clearly distinct from the Western way of war, emerged. The work, itself drawing upon key concepts, definitions and ideas elaborated by Clausewitz, became a significant reference for many scholars making research in the field of American strategic thought. For some, however, the book was lacking in that it took into consideration America's big wars only, denying a long tradition of small wars that had nothing in common with Weigley's American

way of war. This small war tradition, as thoroughly researched by Max Boot in his book *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, was necessary for the expansion, the economic growth and the security of the USA. This study addresses the oversimplifying assumption that one sole specific exclusive American way of war exists. Small wars are not aberrations to the American way of war, as Weigley assumed; rather, they are another variation of the American way of war, one that is deeply rooted in American history. This thesis argues that the American way of war, as described by Weigley, does exist and represents the conventional tradition of big wars in the US. This tradition, contrary to what Max Boot assumes, is the real reflection of the American strategic preference, but also the much controversial one as it necessitates the country's total mobilization and the people's considerable support. Consequently, this research, although establishing the small war tradition as an important military legacy in the USA and as one of the major foundations of a typical American way of war, closely examines the development of the major war tradition or the American Way of War as a point of departure from which it proceeds.

6. Structure of the Thesis

The present thesis consists of four chapters. The first starts with a theoretical background where major concepts are defined and elaborated. It exposes and elucidates Clausewitzean theory of war with special emphasis on the sovereignty of politics, the utility of force to obtain political objectives and on the idea that war is a continuation of policy. Based on the definitions provided, the first section of the chapter ends with a distinction between two types of strategy that serve different political goals. The chapter then moves to the origins of small war tradition in American military history. It demonstrates how this distinct strategic culture firmly established some of the main traits of a persisting paradigm of war making in the United States, even before the republic

was born. War in the American Republican tradition is then elaborately exposed highlighting the impact of the orthodox belief in uniqueness and exceptionalism on the Founding Fathers' perception of war and the manifestation of that same perception in the American Constitution. This theoretical framework gives way then to the actual outcome of the prevailing perceptions of war: the emergence of a typical American way of war. The chapter ends with a description of the classical paradigm within which Americans used to fight their major wars. This description derives from a close observation of the way major wars were fought prior to the Cold War. It enlists the specific foundations and the various aspects of this classical way of war and shows how it managed to ultimately establish the USA as a world superpower.

The second chapter probes into the first major crises that the American way of war faced, starting with the rise of the Soviet Union as a contending world power, its alliance with China and then the successful development of its first atomic bomb. The American response embodied in intense militarisation for the sake of deterrence and the eventual emergence of a potential mutual assured destruction are then examined as major causes for a significant shift in the paradigm. Within this new context, war could no longer be fought in the traditional way. The chapter then deeply probes into US military entanglement in Vietnam, *the* crisis that would genuinely trigger the process of transformation. It scrutinises the causes of the intervention, its political aim and the actual way in which the war was fought. Special emphasis is placed upon the effects of the dragging military involvement and of the ensuing failure. The chapter raises important questions about the existence of a comprehensive national strategy for the use of force and about the repercussions of the traditional apoliticism of US military officers and how the awakening of major US decision makers to these questions led to a major reconsideration of the way America goes to war. The new doctrines emanating from the distillation of the Vietnam lessons, and seemingly

correcting the flaws inherent in the American way of war, namely the Weinberger/Powell and the Air-Land Battle Doctrines are then closely examined on the light of both change and continuity. The chapter ends with a reading of a precursor to a new way of war: the end of the draft in favour of an All-Volunteer-Force.

The third chapter tackles the emergence of a new American way of war drawing upon the new doctrines as well as massive advances in information-based technology developed during the presidency of Donald Reagan. It first considers the roots, the nature and the immediate and far-reaching significance of those technological and operational advances altogether labelled the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). It studies both the military and the political implications of the new technology now available to the United States military and much apprehended by its waning Soviet contender. It also exposes the idea that RMA seems to be one of the reasons that eventually brought about the fall of the Soviet Union. It then depicts the now vague and unpredictable nature of a world resulting from the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new types of threats to this same world and, consequently, to America's interests and security. The chapter thus portrays President George W. Bush's new world order and the role that the United States of America is to play within it as well as the dimension and the utility of its military force to face these increasingly rising challenges to international peace and stability and to America's hegemony. Within the context of the reorientation of security concerns to low intensity conflicts, the chapter inspects persisting traditional flaws inherent in America's approach to this irregular type of warfare despite the Vietnam debacle. The third chapter ends with the Gulf War of 1991 as the first test case to America's supremacy and as a vindication of the Powell/Weinberger Doctrine together with the Revolution in Military Affairs. It highlights apparent changes and fundamental continuity in America's overall approach to warfare through a close examination of both the

military and the political significance of the crisis with regard to immediate results as well as tardy repercussions.

The fourth chapter puts to test the new American Way of war within the sensitive context of humanitarian intervention. It first portrays the increasingly growing phenomenon of globalisation and how it gave birth to the multi-level interconnectedness of the post-Cold War world, which in turn generated the erosion of the monopoly of legitimate organised force by sovereign states. It also describes how economic considerations came to be flagrantly and dangerously intertwined with US national security and puts stress on the growing importance of using – and reconsidering the manner of using – military force to promote and protect America's new grand strategy of openness. The chapter dwells then into the nature of the new interventionism and details America's humanitarian interventions in the Balkans in the 1990's as an example of the way in which the new American way of war was used to honour President Clinton's alleged devotion to peace keeping. It shows how the legacy of Vietnam echoed by the Mogadishu Fiasco led to inaction and then hesitation and clumsy manoeuvring of the Somali and then of the Kosovo crises. The failure in both cases is then exposed with regard to America's role in Europe and in the world, the credibility and the integrity of NATO and the effectiveness of the new way of using force in dealing with humanitarian abuses. The contradictions inherent in humanitarian wars and the bigger contradictions intrinsic in the use of the new American way of war for humanitarian purposes are then clearly revealed. The chapter ends with a discussion of the newer version of the American way of war as a culmination of a long process of transformation and with suggestions for alternative options to deal with increasingly rising organised force. The last chapter demonstrates that the same pattern persists in US strategic thinking with regard to the perception of the utility of force as a political instrument.

CHAPTER ONE

An American Way of War

> Monarchy can go to war from policy or ambition, and if they do not find it suits their views they can, with almost equal ease, withdraw from the contest. But it is far otherwise with Republics. In these, before you enter a war, you must convince the mass of the nation that the war is virtuous and just in its principles, and unavoidable without disgrace. When a free people have become, by reflection, convinced of this, they become reckless of consequences; you rouse a deeper spirit; you concentrate a mightier wrath than a despotic government can ever know.
>
> Congressional Representative Alfred Cuthbert of Georgia, 1824

Introduction

War has been a faithful companion of man for centuries. Either for the sake of self-defence, survival, greed, glory, pride or even – paradoxically – to keep peace, human beings have usually made use of force to impose their will when other means have failed. As a social phenomenon and a seemingly political instrument, war has always been an integral part of American history. This bellicosity, however, had always been delicately balanced by a republican tradition of antimilitarism firmly established by the American Constitution.

This chapter examines what the phrase American way of war is used to refer to. It starts with a theoretical section aiming at understanding war from social and political perspectives with special emphasis on the theory of war as developed by Prussian philosopher and General Carl von Clausewitz. It then scrutinizes how war is perceived in the American republican tradition, the value and the place it is given and how this is translated into the American Constitution. The chapter ultimately tracks war making in the USA on the ground from the colonial period to WWII in an

attempt to demonstrate a friction between theory and practice that eventually gave birth to a typical American way of war. That way of war emerged out of a mixture of antimilitarism and bellicosity, typically different environment and experience, and an adoption of the defining features of nineteenth century industrial wars. It was based on a distinct approach to the use and utility of force, a unique strategic culture that transformed the paradigm within which war could possibly be studied and understood. The chapter aims at setting the ground for the conditions within which this American way of war would then face crises and would have to transform and adapt to meet internal and external challenges to the utility of using force.

1.1 War: A Social Phenomenon and a Political Instrument

"War is as old as man's search for food and shelter" (Keegan 3). It originates in the legitimate human need to make use of force to defend one's self, home, and interests. Whether for the sake of defence or security, force has always been a basic element of human life. Throughout history, this use of force has gradually developed into a state action and was thus transformed from anarchic violence to organized and legitimized war. When Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz defined war at the beginning of the nineteenth century as "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to do our will" (101), he was referring to states that had clearly defined wills. War has gone through different phases of evolution, each one characterised by a distinct style of warfare, encompassing various types of military forces, various strategies, techniques and means of warfare. Yet, war has always been the same recognizable phenomenon: "a construction of the centralized 'rationalized', hierarchically ordered territorialized modern state" (Kaldor 17). As such, war is a definite phenomenon that was firmly established as state activity towards the end of the eighteenth century. It then had to go through several phases of development. War waged between states for a definable political goal, namely state interest, is what is now agreed upon to

be labelled war. The development of war as such is closely bound to the development of the nation state. Conflicts that took place prior to the late eighteenth century are not to be counted as state warfare even the ones undertaken by ancient Rome, for the war was waged against enemies "who had no notion of the separation of state and society" (Kaldor 17).

State interest became thus the sole legitimate justification for war after the establishment of standing armies under the control of the modern state, which was an integral part of the monopolization of legitimate violence. Only sovereign state interest came to legitimise the use of violence (Creveld 41). Military ethics were codified in the just war tradition[3], which rests on two fundamental concepts, the *jus ad bellum* (right to go to war*)* and the *jus in bello* (right conduct in war). *Jus ad bellum* is concerned with the justification of and limits to the use of force. It determines the specific conditions under which resort to warfare can be justified. *Jus in bello* is the body of legal norms that specify the military means that can legitimately be adopted in warfare and regulate the conduct of the warring parties. The latter draws a clear line between warfare as a socially sanctioned activity and warfare as an illegitimate killing (Kaldor 19).

There have always been other varieties of warfare that do in no way fit the stylised description of old wars, and that are thus not referred to as wars, generally referred to as uprisings or insurgencies. Yet, policy makers' and military men's perception of war is based to a large extent on the nineteenth century paradigm of interstate industrial war forged during the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815). The latter were the first example of people's wars, or modern wars, wars where force was used in an innovative way combining the fluid concepts of organizational mobility and operational flexibility with the divergent ones of mass and heavy weapons. These were armed

[3] The just war tradition or theory is a doctrine of military ethics. It aims at ensuring that a war is morally justifiable through a set of criteria that must be met for a war to be considered just.

conflicts between states, "based on the manoeuvre of forces *en masses*, and the total support of the state's manpower and industrial base at the expense of all other interests and for the purpose of absolute victory"(Smith 16-30). Napoleon Bonaparte, with a seemingly unprecedented supreme understanding of the utility of force, had managed to raise the largest military force ever created in Europe, 1,169,000 men, French patriots fighting for the glory of France, under arms after he had introduced conscription, or compulsory service, the *levée en masse*, in 1793 (Kaldor 23)**.** Napoleon showed a deep understanding of the utility of the huge potential inherent in conscription, in the way a citizen army could be used as a steady source of manpower (Smith 30-4).

The characteristic form of war, the way it is conceived of and waged changes from one society to another. Besides, each human historical phase has been characterized by a different mode of warfare, the one that best reflects the community it belongs to. The Prussian military general and philosopher Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) developed a far-reaching theory of war on the basis of his own personal experience in the Napoleonic wars where he had been on the losing side as a prisoner. Clausewitz believes that "every age had its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions" (593). To him, "War belongs...to the province of social life... It would be better to... liken it to business competition which is also a conflict of human interests and activities." (202) War, as such, involves the mobilisation and organisation of individuals – men in most cases – for the purpose of inflicting physical violence on an enemy. It is, as noted earlier, "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will" (Clausewitz 101). Who the enemy is, what might justify the use of violence to compel this same enemy to comply with the opponent's will, the way force is used, and what exactly is expected from its use, all depend on the very nature of the society in which it takes place.

John Keegan, in his *History of Warfare*, also defines war as a universal phenomenon whose form and scope are defined by the society that wages it. He stresses the cultural dimension in any attempt at understanding war, for war is "always an expression of culture, often a determinant of cultural forms, in some societies the culture itself" (11-2). Typical presumptions about war emanate from specific cultural heritage and do to a large extent determine the military behaviour of a given society. People, everywhere in the world, are essentially trapped in a network of preconceptions for the simple reason that this is part of their human nature (Bathurst 121). Yet this does in no way mean that there is necessarily one single cultural paradigm for the use of force, especially if one is referring to the more specific term of 'military culture,' the military professionals' basic assumptions about war (Buley 12). A friction does thus arise between the different assumptions or cultural paradigms of war and the independent military reality on the actual ground. Two forces do shape the military institutions of a given society: threats to the security of a given society engendering a functional imperative on the one hand, and the dominant social, ideological and institutional forces within that same society on the other. The balance between the civilian and military forces increases when the friction diminishes:

> Military institutions, which reflect only social values, may be incapable of performing effectively their military function. On the other hand, it may be impossible to contain within society military institutions shaped purely by functional imperatives. The interaction of these two forces is the nub of the problem of civil-military relations. The degree to which they conflict depends upon the intensity of the security needs and the nature and strength of the value pattern of society (Huntington 2).

If the military culture of a given society radically diverges from its overall values, then it is going to be perceived by its own people as illegitimate. Similarly, if this same military culture is unable to properly respond to specific strategic threats to national security then it is discredited as well. The proper balance between the cultural paradigm of war, or the societal imperatives and the reality of war, which is the set of functional imperatives does determine the conception and the degree of the utility of force to attain definite political objectives (Buley 13).Clausewitz introduces the Hegelian notion of 'absolute war', which is the inner tendency of any war towards the total destruction of the enemy. This ideal concept of absolute war has its own existence, and this existence is in tension with empirical realities, or the friction in real war, which tends to limit the scope of absolute war. Three main concepts make up the theory of war for Clausewitz, first is the relevance of and balance between the state, the army and the people, a trinity without which war cannot succeed. The second is the primacy of policy, which results from the fact that war has its root in a political object that must be kept in sight. The third is the "trial of strength and clash of wills:" victory is achieved through a careful balancing of the war efforts with the enemy's powers of resistance. The means used must be in proportion with the strength of the enemy's will (Clausewitz 87-8). The state – the political leaders – represent reason; the army or the generals stand for chance and strategy while the people embody passion. Absolute war derives from the logic of these three different tendencies. At the political or rational level, the state always pushes harder to counter the resistance it meets to achieve its objectives; the military aims at the disarmament of the opponent to attain the political aim and to forestall a potential counter-attack; and, finally, popular feelings and sentiments determine the strength of will. Yet, even if war tends to unleash passion and hostility that may be uncontrollable, it remains a rational activity (Kaldor 23).

According to Clausewitz, then, war is a social rational activity based on secular considerations characterized by friction emanating from a tension between political plans and practical terrain constraints. In order for wars to achieve their stated objectives, it is essential to know beforehand how it is going to be fought and to take into consideration the three concepts of the war theory he developed: the state, the army and the people. The relevance of and the balance within this trinity is a prerequisite for victory in war. Primacy of policy, the idea that war is nothing more than a servant of politics, is a major concern of strategic studies. The central idea that politics does guide war, that it is its very logic, and that war – despite its tendency towards autonomy – must constantly be conducted on the basis of that central idea is the key to a successful utilisation of force:

> It is, of course, well known that the only source of war is politics—the intercourse of governments and peoples; but it is apt to be assumed that war suspends that intercourse and replaces it by a wholly different condition, ruled by no law but its own… We maintain on the contrary that war is simply a continuation of political intercourse with the addition of other means… How could it be otherwise? Do political relations between peoples and between their governments stop when diplomatic notes are no longer exchanged? Is war not just another expression of their thoughts, another form of speech or writing? Its grammar indeed, may be its own, but not its logic (605).

The main reason why policy primacy is a pre-requisite for any successful utilisation of force stems from the fact that it prevents war from descending into a primitive self-satisfactory act of aggression. “If we keep in mind that war springs from some political purpose, it is natural that the prime cause of its existence will remain the supreme consideration in conducting it”

(Clausewitz 87). Two main key words for understanding the proper relationship between the justification and the conduct of war are ‘logic’ and ‘grammar’. Military officers can indeed, and have to, decide upon the ‘grammar’, which is the proper way battles are to be fought on the actual ground for the simple reason that war per se is a distinct instrument of policy. The conduct of the overall war, however, must always and constantly be guided by political considerations, those that initially justified its very use and do control the rational manner it is to be conducted.

This does in no way mean “the political aim is a tyrant. It must adapt itself to its chosen means, a process which can radically change it” (Clausewitz 87). In other words, warfare is far from being a mere self-validating exercise, but has a typical character and dynamic, a grammar that is inalienable even if it has no policy logic of its own. Clausewitz emphasises the idea that it is in the very “nature of war to be both a process of violence that will tend to escalate in the heat and the passion of the doing, and an instrument of policy” (Gray 93-4). Being a reflection of a specific human interaction and competition through the use of organised violence, the grammar of war, Clausewitz maintains, is distinguished by its inclination to resist coherent human direction and control. This stems from what Clausewitz labels “the fog of war”, a typical imperfection inherent in the informational environment in which war takes place. A set of unpredictable real factors do influence the initially planned course of war and cause it to diverge, what Clausewitz calls “friction”. It also stems from war’s innate tendency – being a quintessentially contest of interactive and competitive wills – to escalate towards its absolute form. Notwithstanding this very nature of war, he insists, policy should always remain the “first consideration,” the one that is supposed to “permeate all military operations, and in so far as their violent nature will admit, it will leave a continuous influence on them” (88).

Three important and intertwined concepts derive from Clausewitzean premise about the political dimension of war: the sovereignty of politics in war, the political utility of force, and war as a continuation of politics. The first is based on the assumption that war does not – and is not supposed to – have its own logic, because the only logic it has is the logic of policy. The second refers to the usefulness of military force in attaining political objectives and is in no way dependent on the first; it is possible to accept the sovereignty of policy and yet be sceptical of the political utility of force. The third is the most far reaching in the sense that "politics permeates all military operations." This concept depends on the first one and is closely linked to it for not only is the political dimension of war ultimately sovereign over its military dimension, but the two are intricately intertwined. Considering either dimension in isolation is utterly unwise since political factors do infiltrate the military conduct of warfare. The immediate implications of these ideas is the fact that war is an art rather than an exact science, in the sense that it is inherently unpredictable. This unpredictability stems from war's very nature as an "interactive contest between subjective beings," as Buley puts it, which means that there is no such a thing as 'purely military' considerations: political objectives must govern the conduct of war. The last implication is that acceptance of the sovereignty of policy does in no way guarantee that war could ever be made predictable for the simple reason that it is waged against an enemy with an inherent human capacity to react in a creative way (11).

To determine how wars are to be fought and how victories are to be obtained, setting a proper strategy is necessary. Strategy refers to the way in which overall military operations are planned and directed on the basis of the clearly set political objective. The concept of strategy is closely related to the concept of power. The difference between the two is that strategy means the ability to create intended effects, while power is a mere capacity in terms of military or economic

strength. Power might be useless in the face of a challenge or in pursuing a specific objective; strategy is indeed what it takes to unleash that power and direct it towards intended purposes. Strategy is all about a choice, or a set of choices emanating from a real ability to grasp situations and to weigh both the dangers and the opportunities inherent in them. It depends on the ability to look forward, imagine and predict better results and how they can be reached, as well as worse scenarios and how they can be prevented. A talented strategist has the ability to think about the different choices available to the others and get ready to thwart, frustrate, or even reinforce their endeavours depending on the situation. He must have a wide vision of strategy that goes beyond the plain mechanical connection of the existing means to reach specific ends. Indeed any formulation of strategy must refer to the changing conditions in which appropriate choices are made, taking into consideration the shifting nature of the armed forces, in terms of military capabilities and the prevalent forms of conflict that outline their division and application. Strategy largely depends – and has an effect – on the development of the international system. States have traditionally been concerned with attempting to influence both their position within the international system and the structure of the system itself (Freedman 9).

Clausewitz defines strategy as “the theory of the use of combats for the object of the war” (102). The war aim to be achieved determines the proper strategy to be adopted. In other words, the type of victory that a strategist wants to achieve determines the way the military is going to fight. The immediate requirement of any war is victory. Military victory is, according to Clausewitz, obtained through one of two essential ways: either the complete overthrow of the enemy or the conquest of some parts of the frontier of the enemy’s country. While the second type of war seeks a limited type of victory due to the strategist’s limited resources, the first type of war is based on the enemy’s destruction as a military power, and his thorough defeat. It is a kind of

war that would, according to Clausewitz, undoubtedly "compel our opponent to fulfil our will," which is no modest aim, per se. The destruction of the adversary's armed forces, or the threat of doing so is, he believes, the only way to get that same enemy submit to our will. The Prussian General perceives it as "the leading principle of war," that one objective that "appears to [overrule] all others." Such an objective requires "a great physical or moral superiority, or a great spirit of enterprise, an innate propensity to extreme hazards" (102).

The German military Historian Hans Delbrück draws upon Clausewitz distinction to suggest that there are two major military strategies that characterize war making: a strategy of annihilation, which seeks the complete overthrow of the enemy's military power; and the strategy of attrition, which seeks the exhaustion or the erosion of the enemy. A strategist whose means are not strong enough to permit pursuit of the direct overthrow of the enemy and who, therefore, resorts to such an indirect approach usually employs attrition (Weigley xxii). In addition to the adequate choice of the way the war would be fought, two important factors determine the outcome of any war: the actual mobilization of force and then the appropriate application of that same force. In other words, for victory to be obtained there must prevail a moral readiness to use already existing physical overwhelming force (Clausewitz 119-20).

1.2 The First American Way of War: a Tradition of Small Wars

Some of the defining traits of a distinctively American spirit appeared long before the birth of the USA. Those traits came to forge both a way of life and a way of warfare. It is important to know and to understand the early traditional American way of war simply because it is in that remote past that some of the essential strategic mental habits that do now govern America's way of thinking about and of making war were developed. The encounter of a European mind with a native American mind, starting from the early sixteenth century, the new natural environment, the

inevitability of adaptation for the sake of survival, together with probably other important factors did give birth to a distinct American character. That fact, gradually but surely, came to differentiate the European inhabitants of the new world from those still populating the old world. A divergent American mind was created out of the mixture of a set of habits inherited from mother Europe and a set of new life styles issue of an adaptation process that came to characterize the early decades of the colonization of America.

Whether adapting, reacting, defending or offending, the way early Americans made war remains an important part of a military legacy that still has its impact on American military strategy. Beyond a mere description of a way of warfare, per se, it is worth noting that an exclusively distinct American way of war emerged, a distinctive American strategic culture. The English inhabitants of Britain's thirteen colonies underwent a set of cultural and political transformations as a result of the specificities of frontier life, a transformation partly resulting from their confrontation with a new mind-set that favoured, as way of war, heavy reliance on ambush, surprise, and raid, with varying intensity and duration. In addition to total war mind-set that exited in Europe, the colonials' fighting brutality increased because of the encounter with the Native Americans. The roots of a distinctively American way of warfare, then, can be traced back to what John Grenier calls the frontier *petites guerres* against Native Americans during the colonial era. Extirpative war, the use of rangers, and scalp hunting were the key elements (423). Early Americans created a military tradition, a way of war, that accepted, legitimized, and encouraged attacks upon and the destruction of non-combatants, of their villages and of their agricultural resources. Two major elements of warfare were forged into the colonials' first way of war: unlimited war and irregular war (10).

These American Englishmen, thus, became actually committed to a typically American irregular and total way of warfare: one that, short of attacking shockingly elusive enemy troops, targets the enemies' logistical resources including food stores, crops, villages and non-combatants. This frontier warfare spirit, relying on total war and extravagant violence would be largely influential in shaping the American character and national ethos. The frequent blurring of boundaries between combatants and non-combatants would become a living legacy of the first American way of war (Grenier 15). The frontier wars against the native inhabitants of America set the USA down its military trajectory as they led to a predisposition to target civilian populations. This first American way of war was used in a series of devastating, brutal and effective campaigns in ensuring the subjugation of the Indians and securing the conquest of the trans-Appalachian West. This martial conduct of total war and irregular war came to seemingly reshape the character of the settlers of the thirteen British colonies during the early years of settlement and gradually, but surely, differentiate them from their European compatriots. This transformation resulted from uniquely exceptional North American conditions that produced genuinely distinct cultural and social habits in turn giving birth to peculiar military attitudes that created a distinctively American way of war not only in tactics, but also in logistics and military culture as a whole.

The early way of war thus firmly established the small-war tradition, another variation of the American Way of War that would effectively serve to build the USA into what it is nowadays. 'Small war' is the literal translation of the word *guerrilla*, which would win its name in the Spanish resistance to Napoleon's armies at the beginning of the nineteenth century. *Guerrilla* is the diminutive of *Guerra*, which in the Spanish language means war. Guerrilla warfare though is by no means a *small* version of ordinary warfare, as some would assume, and is used not to refer to the mere scale of combat, but to the set of military tactics employed. Such warfare might actually

include large numbers of forces on each side, but the point is that these forces would not be wearing uniforms and holding lines (Quester 110).

In the US, guerrilla warfare is a military tradition in which campaigns were generally fought by a relatively small number of professional soldiers pursuing limited objectives with limited means against the forces of less developed countries. These are of four major types: punitive, protective, pacifying and profiteering. A few examples of small wars would be, in addition to wars of territorial conquest waged mainly, but not solely, against Native Americans, the ones fought against what the United States called the Barbary Pirates of North Africa in the beginning of the nineteenth century and all those campaigns fought to open up China and Japan to Western commerce. As the USA grew to great power status, these would become larger, longer and more ambitious military interventions. Guerrilla is the equivalent of twentieth century low intensity conflicts or military operations other than war. Some would label them America's imperial wars. These would cover a wide array of American military adventures that are in no way America's major military conflicts, or, big wars (Boot xix-xx).

The frontier spirit did establish the first foundation of the American Way of War[4], that of using relatively low-cost military interventions to reach political goals that cannot or do not need to be fought with a large or full-scale deployment of US military forces. As the American military culture evolved, some came to regard such campaigns as aberrations to the American Way of War that would firmly be established with the growth of the USA to world power status. America's small wars, however, are in no way the exceptions to America's way of war, nor are they the evidence that an American Way of War is nothing more than a myth. They rather represent another

[4] For more details about frontier warfare see Grenier, John, The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814, Cambridge University Press, 2005 ; for small war tradition see Boot, Max, The Small Wars of Peace : Small Wars and the Rise of American Power, New York: Basic Books, 2014

variety of the typical way in which the USA uses force to obtain, in a pragmatic way, a stated and desired political objective, a way that does not fit under the conventional meaning of war, but that nonetheless constitute a legacy in America's strategic thinking that is essential in understanding many of America's military stances nowadays. The frontier wars were especially momentous in establishing the major attribute of the American Way of War, that of complete annihilation of the enemy.

1.3 War in the American Republican Tradition

Because military culture is normally a continuation of political culture, the way the United States of America makes war is highly affected by the political believes of its opinion and policy makers. Understanding the typical American way of war (one that is supposed to differ from the way Europe goes to war) rests on a clear comprehension of the way war is politically perceived in the United States of America, its dimension in the country's strategy, the manner it is used and the extent to which it is made effective. A set of factors did combine to create a pre-perception of both the dimension of the use of force in American foreign policy and its utility in attaining political objectives. These include republicanism and democracy, belief in Manifest Destiny and in the exceptionalism of the American experience, the free security of a country – sheltered between two oceans and sufficiently distant from Europe to be immune of its power politics – and a system of checks and balances inherent in the American Constitution.

For the majority of politicians and military men in the USA, talking about the way they have always made war, or the way they came to make war is a source of national pride, a further proof of their much-glorified sense of uniqueness and history of exceptionalism. As early as 1630, Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts predicted a quintessentially unique future for the newly born colonies: "for wee must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eies of all people

are upon us" (qtd. in McDougal 17). In his novel *White Jacket*, Herman Melville wrote "we Americans are the peculiar, chosen people—the Israel of our time; we bear the arch of the liberties of the world" (qtd. in Schmidt 7). Similarly, Thomas Paine believed that the American Constitution was "the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth," a document that would allow the United States of America to "begin the world over again" (qtd. in D. E. Schmidt 8).

Such an orthodox belief in American exceptionalism and the nation's potential to lead the world and to reshape it in the American image entailed the enormous risk of an arrogant bellicose state. However, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and the other Founding Fathers, who had a deep understanding of human nature, would have none of it. They all knew how dangerous militarism was for the Republic. Not only was the way early Americans made war at odds with everything the Founding Fathers believed in, but so was war per se (McDougal 19). American exceptionalism was to be a light to lighten the world without the USA having to intervene in any special way in foreign affairs. An aversion to wars was thus set by the Founding Fathers while building the new nation. As early as 1783, the Continental Congress passed a resolution affirming US traditions of neutrality and anti-militarism in foreign affairs. Congress vowed that the thirteen states "should be as little as possible entangled in the politics and controversies of European nations" (qtd. in Raimondo 67). One of the factors distinguishing America from the Old World, Americans believed, was their aversion to the European preoccupation with power politics that was behind the bloody competition continuously taking place in Europe (Bacevich, *American Empire* 124).

The free security that the new nation enjoyed because of its distance from the Old World both fostered and justified the neutral policy it adopted with regard to Europe. Actually, the unparalleled degree of military security bequeathed by North America's geopolitical position

increasingly became the foundation of a sense of pride and exceptionalism. Many Americans came to perceive this fact as an absolute value especially after the war of 1812 and the rising awareness that Britain could no longer afford an effective projection of power into North America. The uniqueness of the American experience with military security had been for a long period of time much celebrated by American political leaders and public. Thomas Jefferson regarded as a blessing the fact of being "separated by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one quarter of the globe" (qtd. in Buley 23). Similarly, Abraham Lincoln would assure the Americans that they were safe unless they themselves became the authors of their own destruction: "Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean, and crush us at a blow? Never! … If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher" (qtd. in Buley 23). In 1784, the Swedish minister told John Adams in London: "Sir, I will take it for granted that you will have sense enough to see us in Europe cut each other's throat with a philosophical tranquillity" (qtd. in Buley 24).

This sense of exceptionalism started to be felt earlier with the uniqueness of the colonial experience followed by a declaration of independence and a revolution against Britain. In declaring its independence from Europe, Americans did break away from the firmly established European state system and became detached from Europe's international power game and the entailing necessary diplomatic or military manoeuvres (Rapoport 61). After the Revolution, American national identity, that of the "defenders of republican virtues and ideals [and] guardians of the sacred flame of liberty" (Heideking 98) came to be defined against American perception of Europe, specifically against England – the "counter-image of a virtuous commonwealth…unable to defend the liberty of its own people and intent on enslaving others" (Heideking 98). Contrary to the

bellicose nature of European monarchies and empires, Americans believed, their country's exceptional republicanism prompted peace, harmony and benevolence.

To manifest its aversion to European power politics, thus, the new nation, decided to keep away from European conflicts watching France and England fight seventeenth and eighteenth century dynastic and territorial wars (D. E. Schmidt 49). In 1796, President George Washington, in his Farewell Address to the nation, reaffirmed a colonial tradition of avoiding involvement in European affairs: "It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world…. Taking care to always keep ourselves by suitable establishment on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies" (Washington).

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams further emphasized American neutralist foreign policy in 1821:

> America does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion only of her own. She will recommend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence; she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interests and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy and ambition, which assumed the colours and usurped the standards of freedom… She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit. (qtd. in McDougal 36)

Neutralism, not isolationism, allowed the USA to carry on a lively economic, cultural and diplomatic exchange with the rest of the world. The genius of the Founding Fathers was to guide American exuberant idealism into domestic policy focussing on improving the experiment in self-government. American idealism was not meant to be exported (Schmidt 8-9). The Founding Fathers knew the danger of the nation's potential entanglement in European wars. They knew that past monarchs and executives have always abused war-making powers. In the new nation, the concept of separation of powers, carefully crafted as an integral part of the US Constitution, recognizes unique authority for each political branch, and to ensure that none of the institutions would abuse its unique authority, a system of checks and balances was as well created. The President was appointed Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, and hence has the power to decide upon the way the war is to be fought. Yet that could happen only after the war had been declared, and, *only* the Congress was given the power to declare war (Lees, Maidment and Tappin 2, 6). This distinction between declaring war and waging it remained the norm, and the way America fights its big wars for about two centuries in the USA.

Presidents would not be entrusted with the war-making power. The executive was placed at the head of the military establishment creating a civilian supremacy over the military to forestall any uniformed officer taking over the government. The president would have an army, as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and was given the power to lead it and to make treaties and different appointments with the advice and the consent of the Senate. Nonetheless, he was denied the command to unleash it in an attempt to take the nation to war unless the Congress votes an approval.[5] That was precisely done to leash the dogs of war. America's experiment with self-

[5] The US president is, nevertheless empowered to repel a potential surprise attack, but not to punish a nation for an attack. This tradition would first be broken by President Truman's deployment of US troops in Korea in June 1950 without the approval of the Congress.

government taught the new nation utter aversion to war and arbitrary rule. No president was meant to go to war without the sanction of the American Congress. As far as the USA is concerned, the Founding Fathers made sure no monarchical war making was to take place (Bacevich, *American Empire* 122).

Article one section eight of the US Constitution states that "Congress shall have the power…..to declare war" (The Constution of the United States of America). The point in empowering Congress to declare war is to spread the decision to go to war among the representatives of the people, to allow them to have a rational and protracted discussion and come out with a collective decision. The aim was to discourage easy entrance into wars. In addition to declaring war, the American Constitution did empower the Congress to provide for the common defence, raise and support navies and armies, govern the militia, levy taxes and spend monies. For the sake of making it hard for the United States to go to war, the framers intentionally pulled apart the purse from the sword. At the same time, they set the tradition of struggling for the sake of obtaining the valuable privilege of conducting foreign policy. In other words, the American Constitution did institutionalise a republican culture towards both war and the military so as to ensure friction between this objective reality and the future generations' freedom of action (Buley 26-7).

The new nation, embedded with attributes of democracy, was not meant to be a war-like society. A culture of war requires a different type of society; one where the president asserts dominance over the Congress to wage *his* wars and where the military force becomes magnified and the nation's resources diverted to defence. Presidents use their power to conscript young man

for the war and to place them on harm's way. It is a society where the ultimate power of government is the power to go to war, not the power to tax and spend (Schmidt 18). Antimilitarism, thus, was at the basis of the nation's founding: Americans had to always keep a watchful eye on soldiers as potential instruments of oppression. Avoiding large standing armies and excessive taxation became the norm for the American citizens as these were clearly antithetical to liberty, and military competition reflected a tendency towards power politics that the American Founders repudiated (Bacevich, *American Empire* 122). The proper form that a military organisation is to undertake within the United States should be one that can never be at odds with its very democratic values. A large regular Army would be a sign of political and moral corruption. The compromise took the form of a modest standing army in times of peace, supplemented with a massive and swift mobilisation of citizen-soldiers in times of emergency (Buley 26).

During peacetime, Congress was given enough powers to reign supreme; and the president had to head over a submissive, modest military force. Continuously prohibiting the mixture of soldiers and politics, it was a policy habit to keep both the US Army and the US Navy, during peacetime, at the margin of national life. Being blessed with free security, the USA kept standing forces of modest size and capabilities, serving much more as an adjunct to local development than as a war fighting army. The navy was particularly useful in supporting America's expanding commercial interests (Bacevich, *American Empire* 123). The army's core mission was continental defence. In 1884 Sheridan, the commanding General of the Army declared: "Excepting for our ocean commerce and our seaboard cities, I do not think we should be much alarmed about the probabilities of war with foreign powers, since it would require more than a million and a half of men make a campaign upon land against us" (qtd. in Weigley 178). All that was required during America's free-security age were "garrisons for the harbour fortifications and a constabulary to

pacify the frontier and deal with unforeseen emergencies – tasks performed by a regular army of 6,000 to 15,000 prior to the American Civil War and about 26,000 after the end of Reconstruction." (Buley 29) All this, however, instantly changed by emergency time: a mighty host of citizen-soldiers was raised on a crash basis. Regulars provide the mass volunteer army freshly raised with professional guidance and expertise (Buley 29)

That sheer mass proved quite efficient in many instances, but quite wasteful as well, not only fiscally, but even more in terms of human losses during the battles. The battlefield, because of this practice of extemporizing citizen army became the training ground for both soldiers and their officers. That was the price to pay for keeping the military on the margin of national life. Compensating advantages were numerous: the low peacetime military expenditures reduced the fiscal burdens imposed on US citizens and freed resources for other national priorities. Keeping the officer corps on a short leash served as a check against incipient militarism (Bacevich, *American Empire* 124).

Despite a clear separation between the civil and the military in the USA, the country's republican political culture would have a long lasting effect on the military. Colonel Arthur L. Wagner predicted what the future of US military would look like:

> It is clear that our military future will not be shaped by theories based on military principles alone. The military policy of the United States will be strongly affected by the popular predilection for economical expenditures in time of peace; by a jealousy of standing armies; by reliance upon volunteers in time of war; and by a more or less active influence of popular opinion in the direction of armies in the field. (qtd. in Buley 29)

This aversion to standing armies and suspicion towards military officers never meant that Americans were given to pacifism, in practice. Bellicosity would indeed continuously be an integral part of American foreign policy. Use of military force would be the means to get their independence from Britain, take the land of the Native Americans, conquer vast territories in the west and southwest, and force the Southern states back under federal rule. Out of this mixture of antimilitarism and frequent bellicosity, a distinctive approach to military policy became the norm (Bacevich, *American Empire* 23). In fact, it did give birth to a specific relationship between the nation's republican political culture and its military establishment. American Republicanism was indeed deeply ambivalent in its attitudes towards the professional military establishment. While starving the military for resources in times of peace, keeping it at the margin of life and relying upon a modest regular force, it did require quick and decisive victory, with minimal casualties, in times of war.

For the sake of squaring the circle, a massive mobilisation of the nation's human and material resources had to instantly take place to muster the required level of overwhelming force. Consequently, the military became equally ambivalent towards republicanism in return. Every time they had to fight the nation's wars, they rightly dreaded that the American public would be unable to tolerate a long-lasting mobilisation of citizen-soldiers and material, and had thus to carry the burden of a quick victory. Perceiving themselves as guardians of democracy and republican virtues in America, and being paradoxically perceived as a threat to republican liberty, the military intellectuals became quite resentful of the 'ingratitude' of their nation. The US Army suffered the bulk of republican unease towards the military from 1776 onwards and was increasingly growing

sensitive towards the overall societal and political culture. As for the Navy, it was rather regarded more as a guardian of trade than as a threat (Buley 27-9).

1.4 The Classical American Way of War: "War is Hell"

To better understand the way the American politicians and military men used to conceive of and apply war, it is quite often much more reliable to deduce their ideas about it, by observing the very way in which they made it. A study of the American Way of War is also a study of strategy in action: how Americans have always applied strategic thought in their different wars. The way of thinking of a war, of perceiving it, determines the way it is fought. Observing the actual warfare method, the specific techniques used on the fighting ground, helps confirm those definite social, cultural and political habits that truly shaped the American way of war. Comparing the mental perception to the actual practice helps identify the extent to which Americans know about and understand their own way of making war.

From the colonial era to the Civil War, while the USA was developing as a new country, its military prowess was relatively weak. Consequently, US generals sought limited political goals and could only engage in small wars and wars of attrition (Weigley 13-6).Despite an antimilitarist republican culture, belief in Manifest Destiny gave birth to a two-faced exceptionalism. A marriage of antimilitarism and self-justified bellicosity emerged (Bacevich, American Empire 124). Prior to the Civil War, Americans fought their wars, big and small, in proportion with what they could possibly afford. The first of America's big wars was the American War of Independence (1775-1783). It was a war fought with an immensely ambitious political objective, that of obtaining independence by stripping away territory inhabited by the colonials from the British Empire. Complete overthrow of the enemy was impossible, given the immense pronounced British

advantage in all respects. Such an ambitious aim necessitated a military might that the Americans could not yet afford.

The American Revolution was a war of attrition because it was the only affordable strategy against an amazing British military prowess. During the war, the US generals sought to wear down their British opponents gradually until the British government concluded that victory would come at too high a cost. George Washington perfectly understood that the only way he could rely on to defeat the enemy, taking into consideration the military poverty of his own generalship, was eroding the adversary's strength by means of hit-and-run strikes against his positions (Weigley 13-6). Major General Nathanael Greene of the Continental army made use of a strategy of partisan war or guerrilla warfare, based on finesse in the use of force, especially in the ability to run away, but not to run away too far. That unconventional strategy of warfare accorded thoroughly with the revolutionary goals and, along with other favourable circumstances[6], ultimately led to victory (Weigley 17-39). The United States of America forced its independence from the world's greatest empire with the force of arms.

The tradition of unconventional warfare, or guerrilla war had been, as mentioned earlier, firmly established as an early American way of waging small wars long before the USA was born, in a series of military extirpative campaigns against Native Americans. It subsequently became an integral part of the American military Legacy. The frontier wars offered a foretaste of a forthcoming American perception and way of war, one that aims at nothing short of the enemy's destruction as a military power in order to "compel our opponent to fulfil our will," as Clausewitz

[6] Although typically underplayed in American history books, European military and economic support was vital to the success of the American revolutionary war effort. For more details on the issue, see Barbara W. Tuchman, The First Salute: A View of the American Revolution (New York: Ballantine, 1988).

put it. Such a hugely ambitious war aim, however, necessitated an incomparable amount of moral and physical readiness.

The tradition of industrial war underwent many developments that turned it into total war after the Prussian reforms. These included the thinking soldier, talented and substantially trained in both the intellectual and the military side, and the general staff to provide a central structure that would coordinate among the various military formations as well as between the political and the military leaderships; and the immense industrial innovations of the nineteenth century, namely iron and steam (Smith 52-76). The first major conflict to incorporate the characteristics of industrialized total war and the new developments in transport, communication and weaponry was the American Civil War (1861-1866). It was America's first total war, based on the Napoleonic model of warfare, and the subsequent Prussian reforms. An impressive nineteenth century military confrontation drawing upon the major dramatic developments in industrial technology applied to the military field, namely the railway and the telegraph, together with the mass production of guns, pioneered in the USA and used for the first time during the Civil War (Kaldor 26).

The war was fought for two different objectives. The North sought to restore the Union by bringing the seceding states back under Federal rule, while the South sought to defeat the Union forces and keep them out of the newly created independent confederacy. Each resorted to war in order to uphold a political vision by force. A clash of wills decided in actual war by a colossal trial of strength: the North by managing to destroy the capacity of the south to make war the way it chose broke its very will to achieve its strategic objective. President Abraham Lincoln had harnessed the people, industrially and through conscription, to the army. He made use of his logistical superiority relying on extensive network of railways, conscription and industrial output

and sought to reach military victories that would be decisive enough as to break the will of the South to resist (Smith 82-3).

Initially President Lincoln had wanted to facilitate a future reconciliation with the Confederate States by fighting the war in the most appeasing and humane way possible. By 1862, however, he realised that, for the war to end, and for victory to be achieved, much blood had to be shed (Weigley 133); "no general yet found can face the arithmetic, but the end of the war will be at hand when he shall be discovered" (qtd. in Cohen 38). The generals appointed to carry the heavy burden of "facing the arithmetic" and ending the war were Ulysses S Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman. To overturn Robert E. Lee's strategy of wide-ranging mobility that threatened to prolong the war against the south, the generals had to adopt a strategy that would both overthrow the Confederate armed forces and destroy their state (Weigley 92-152). Instead of resorting to a conciliatory strategy to guarantee a smooth return of the seceding states, the Union was seemingly forced to make use of overwhelming strength to force the enemy back under federal rule in an unconditional surrender. During the course of the Civil War, it became apparent that it was significantly difficult to subordinate the chaos of war to any logic of policy short of the stated objective of unconditional surrender.

The war ended up to be a strongly transformative episode in US military history based on General William Sherman's 'strategy of terror' in Georgia and Carolina combined with General Grant's "strategy of annihilation" in Virginia (Weigley 151). While the Civil War introduced the concept of annihilation as a typical aspect of an American way of war, it also enlarged the scope in which American soldiers perceived civilians as potential military targets. General Sherman's strategy of deliberately making use of terrorisation to undermine civilian morale (Weigley 232) meant that all possible means could be used to win the war, including the actual targeting of non-

combatants. General Sherman's famous statement about the nature of warfare, "War is Hell" (Carr Introduction) best illustrates the harsh measures undertaken by the Union Army to defeat the Confederate states, especially in his march to the sea, in which he had undertaken both a systematic and extensive destruction of the enemy's resources and a strategy of terror against civilians. To silence complaints about the ruthlessness of his strategy among his own fellow-military, he acknowledged that he was aware of the consequences, but that he had no other choice for such was, according to him, the nature of war. "You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will," General Sherman vowed, "war is cruelty and you cannot refine it" (qtd. in Buley 19).

Within the context of the morality of warfare, Sherman's "War is Hell" is undoubtedly in utter contradiction with the Just War Tradition of *jus in Bello* – the law governing the way in which war is to be fought. This is not meant to imply that the general was especially immoral or that he abandoned the ethical concepts he learned at West Point – the US Military Academy– but that he actually sacrificed the means for the sake of the end. In other words the general placed the laws of warfare he had learned on a continuum of pragmatism so as to confirm his belief that moral and political considerations alike end the moment warfare begins and that the only moral justification that accounts is *jus ad bellum*, or the cause for which hostilities were first initiated. This justification was the fact that the seceding states, according to General Sherman, bore all the responsibility of the cruelty of war because they, "in the midst of peace and prosperity, plunged the nation into war" and as such "deserve all the [ensuing] curses and maledictions" (qtd. in Reston 51). Less than two decades earlier, the same justification was used to wage war against Mexico. (Reston 50-1)

Furthermore, General Sherman's declaration that war cannot be "refined" is based on the assumption that 'refining' war would have prolonged it, yet war in the American tradition, and in

faithful accordance with the republican nature of the state and all its implications, had to be made swift and decisive. Military officers were highly sensitive towards public opinion for they knew that the American society would not tolerate a protracted armed conflict that would jeopardize the lives of the republic's citizen-soldiers. Ulysses S. Grant wrote after the end of the Civil War "anything that could have prolonged the war a year beyond the time that it did finally close, would probably have exhausted the North to such an extent that they might then have abandoned the contest and agreed to a separation" (qtd. in Weigley 128).

The only strategy that allows a war to end quickly is to wage it at the utmost intensity. By adopting a strategy of annihilation, General Sherman embraced a philosophy that was in stark opposition to a central precept of the *jus in Bello* tradition – the principle of proportionality. Proportionality simply states that the means utilised to attack a specific target and the collateral damage likely to result from the assault must unquestionably be in strict proportion with the military capacity of the targeted enemy. Simply put, the amount of force used to fight an enemy is not to be disproportionate to the object to be attained. This is what the moral tenet of the economy of force is all about. Nevertheless, if the high intensity of the attack breaks the southern will to resist and ends the war quickly, then, according to General Sherman, it is justified. The *jus in Bello* code of the US Army, articulated in 1863 went so far as to argue that "The more vigorously wars are pursued, the better for humanity. Sharp wars are brief" (Buley 20). Humanity is nonetheless here used to refer to US soldiers only because, on the ground, there is nothing human in mass killing, crop burning, and civilian terrorizing. The Civil War marks the beginning of the way in which military men and policy makers would always attempt to counter the lack of public stamina with regard to prolonged war out of fear of casualties. It marks the beginning of a long lasting

ambivalence between a republican tradition that abhors the cost of warfare and a bellicose nature that does not hesitate to use war to reach political objectives.

The quintessential cruelty of war, as perceived and justified by General Sherman does more importantly reflect the basic military assumption of the nature of warfare regarding the relationship between war and policy. Clausewitz believes that war has its own grammar but not its own logic – because its logic is one of policy. For General Ulysses S. Grant, however, "the art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike at him hard as you can and keep moving." (qtd. in Buley 21) In other words the only logic that war obeys once it is started is the logic of force for the simple reason that resort to warfare is not regarded as a continuation of policy, but as a response to the failure of policy.

This is a corollary of the sharp ambivalence in the relationship between the nation's republican political culture and its military establishment. An immediate implication of this discrepancy is the fact that war in the United States has not been perceived as a continuation of politics by other means, or an instrument of policy, but rather as a reaction to the failure of diplomacy and politics. A pre-perception prevailed in American thought about war that was entirely anti-Clausewitzean, at least in theory, suggesting that force is used where policy fails. This assumption rejects the very idea of the sovereignty of policy over war for the logic of politics ends to apply the very moment war begins. A distinctive grammar of war is automatically emphasised, as it tends to gather its own momentum and resist the logic and the limits of policy. This can be observed in the narrow military definition given to strategy in the nineteenth century. In 1897, the senior instructor at the US Army Staff College still stated that strategy was "the art of moving an army in the theatre of operations…to increase the probability of victory." (qtd. in Buley 21)

The Civil War was ultimately won by a decisive and brutal defeat of the South. The will of the North was imposed on the South; the union of the country was restored at a high price[7]. The way used was commensurate with the stated political objective. Annihilation was, for the first time in American history, used on such a scale and with such a mobilization of the nation's resources. It was the first of America's big wars, a genuine embodiment of the classical American way of war built upon a strategy of annihilation. The Civil War was the first American total industrial war, where the nation's blood and treasure was staked to achieve the unconditional surrender of the enemy. This war, however, was not only fought within this nineteenth century total war paradigm, but was also the culmination of a long process that the American way of war had been undergoing ever since the Thirteen British Colonies had been founded in North America. A way of war that shared many of the traits of European wars, but converged in many basic others because of the specificities of the American environment, culture and experience. The result was both a distinct perception to war and a distinct way of fighting it.

Resort to annihilation as a military strategy was the out product of an orthodox belief in a unique political culture. This in turn gave birth to an absolutist mindset that accepted no substitute for victory. In its sharp distinction between war and peace as two completely different states, this mindset harmonised with the culture of an exceptional republican experience. In insisting on war's internal thrust, its independent and sovereign logic, it articulated a deep sensitivity towards the restrictions of popular support. In its sheer preference for the use of an overwhelming force that is unlimited by political constraints and considerations, it sought quick and decisive victory so that the republic could shortly return to the normal state of peace. As a military culture, this absolute conception of war, thus, sought to keep the republic away from casual involvement in European

[7] Six hundred and twenty thousand US soldiers died during the Civil War.

military clashes, while perfectly ensuring that, once committed, the US military would fight in a manner that optimised the Republic's assets and minimized its weakness (Buley 31).

In the aftermath of the Civil War, isolation on the western frontier allowed the Army to develop its own professional standards free from civilian – both presidential and congressional – interference. The US military, thus, did develop its own concept of military professionalism, while at the same time attempting to function properly within a typically liberal society. Consequently, military professionalism became equated with apoliticism, and with a crucial emphasis on developing the technical military competence and skills needed in the conduct of striking battles. Some army officers like William Sherman and Emory Upton attempted to reform the Army on the model of the Prussian military (Buley 28). Upton was by far the most influential reformer and advocate of the separation of the Army from what he termed the "mere politicians". In his *Military Policy of the United States*, he contended that officers should be free of civilian interference for a better conduct of military operations. This, according to Weigley, would have a long-term damage on the conduct of US policy: "Emery Upton did lasting harm in setting the main current of American military thought not to the task of shaping military institutions that would serve both military and national purposes, but to the futile task of demanding that the national institutions be adjusted to purely military expediency" (281).The American Civil War thus marked a turning point in American military history as it firmly established the American Way of War based on the neat understanding that industrial capability decides the outcome of war. Seeking the decisive defeat of the enemy through the utter destruction of his means to make war became an integral part of the American military strategy. It firmly established the US tradition of war as a search for the technical process and solution to obtain a military victory rather than an art as described by Clausewitz (Smith 88). A clear-cut strategic culture relying upon typically American advantages

was accordingly emerging with the approach of the twentieth century. A set of profound economic and geographical conditions were beginning to shape the future of wars in the USA. The vast natural realities in addition to the political, economic and military developments of the country made this transition from small war and attrition to annihilation not only possible but also necessary.

The first of these manifest advantages is the gigantic continental territory endowed with abundant natural resources and with a population larger than that of most European powers, which gave the US a pronounced benefit in men and material. The correspondingly extensive transportation and communication network built both inside and outside a country bordered by two vast oceans was likewise of momentous significance. The network was constructed thanks to America's large industry and advanced technology. This gave the US a distinct advantage in the rapid movement of people and products in peace and of men and material in war. A soaring weapons system was similarly developed with the use of technology. Mass, mobility and high technology would make of the USA the most successful military power of the twentieth century (Weigley 92-152).

The twentieth century American Way of War had three main military qualities: the capacity to obtain and to use overwhelming mass, in both men and material; the wide-ranging mobility thanks to a huge network of highly developed transportation and communication; and the high technology weapons systems. These would make of the American Way of War a strategy of annihilation by excellence (Kurth 53). Parallel to those three military advantages, a political and an international feature also became an integral part of the American Way of War. The political attribute is a high public support for the war effort. The picture of a provoked democracy mobilized behind a popular cause both underlined and sustained US victory in wars. The international feature

was America's reliance upon allied countries, in its twentieth-century wars to provide a good deal of manpower and material –mass– while fighting common enemies. An example of the fact that the American Way of War was a coalition way of war is the First World War, where the French and the British armies brought more mass to the American side (Kurth 53).

The apolitical approach to war persisted through the twentieth century, as the concept of strategy remained narrowly military. The *Principles of Strategy* of 1921 and then 1963 reflected a continuing rejection of the concept of war as an instrument of policy: "politics and strategy are radically and fundamentally things apart. … All that soldiers ask is that once the policy is settled, strategy and command shall be regarded as being in a sphere apart from politics." (Pearlman 20-1) So did the ensuing tradition of forcing an unconditional surrender of the enemy through the use of overwhelming force. The American military had, since the Civil War, developed this preoccupation with Napoleonic decisive battle at the expense of the broader political objectives of the military action. When President Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) decided to intervene in the First World War, his rhetoric of re-establishing the balance of power in Europe through limited participation and preventing a victor's peace had to be abandoned for a dictated peace or an unconditional surrender option that would ensure the American public support for the war. (Pearlman 188) The Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces on the Western Front between 1917 and 1918, General John Joseph Pershing, believed that "complete victory can only be achieved by continuing the war until we force an unconditional surrender from Germany, but if the Allied Governments decide to grant an armistice; the terms should be so rigid that under no circumstances could Germany again take up arms" (qtd. in Buley 31). The aim was to break the stalemate, annihilate the enemy and bring a quick end to fighting. This was the only way the

American military could function within a republic that is suspicious of its own officers and that abhors long military commitments.

Although rejecting the Clausewitzean view of war as a continuation of politics, which was immensely fostered by the long period of free security, the obverse of American passivity during times of peace was its crusading tendency during times of war. (Lippmann 28-9). For the alleged end of seeing democracy prevail in the Caribbean, President Wilson sent US troops into Haiti in 1915. Two years later, he deployed troops to occupy the Dominican Republic. In both instances, the stay was prolonged. He also incessantly meddled with Mexican internal affairs and dispatched military expeditions into the country in 1914 and 1916 declaring that "the United States had gone down to Mexico to serve mankind" because, he claimed, his country had been "founded for the benefit of mankind" (qtd. in Magstadt 85). Justified, despite their failure, as being well intentioned and in utter consistency with the Monroe Doctrine, Wilson's proclaimed military endeavours were an integral part of his inaugurated policy of fashioning the world in the image of America. US policymakers have always justified crusading warfare – the second face of American exceptionalism – by America's unique ideology and by what they presumed were unquestionable benign intentions. The aim was nothing short of bringing the whole world in conformity with American policies and principles (Bacevich, *American Empire* 87). Likewise, America's entry in WWI had one allegedly altruistic stated goal, making the world "safe for democracy" (Magstadt 78).

Back to its isolationist foreign policy between the two world wars, which further fostered popular ambivalence towards warfare, it proved immensely difficult to get domestic support for US military involvement on behalf of Europe before Pearl Harbour. In August 1941, three-quarters of the American citizens voted against intervention. General of the Army George Marshall

observed that Americans did not have "that tremendous spirit that comes of defending [their] own home" (qtd. in Pearlman 224) to the same degree as did the Europeans (Pearlman 224). President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945) did privately wish that "a German bomb could be dropped over" (qtd. in Pearlman 241) the United States, expressing the same feeling that General Marshall had (241). Even before the Second World War took place, Army War College planners were persuaded that public stamina would be America's chief weakness. During the course of the war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff repeatedly informed the British that the American people would not "countenance a long war of attrition" (254). For the American Army, one type of war only was worth preparing for; the one in which overwhelming force was used and public aversion to high casualties was silenced (Buley 30).

Therefore, obviously when the United States took part in WWII, the absolutist mindset showed up in the image of massive and indiscriminate killing rightly justified by the Nazi way of war. President Franklin Roosevelt told the nation the reason why and the manner in which the US intends to fight in Europe: "we must face the fact that modern warfare as conducted in the Nazi manner is a dirty business. We don't like it, we didn't want to get in it, but we are in it and we're going to fight it with everything we've got." (qtd. in Buley 25) Similarly, President Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb was according to him a logical response:

> We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbour, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned all pretence of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war. (qtd. in Walzer 246)

President Truman, just like General Sherman, during the Civil War, blamed the Japanese for his use of the nuclear bomb and for the massacre of civilians that ensued. Public opinion polls of the US strategic bombing against Japan and Germany showed support to the campaigns (Buley 25). The use of the absolute weapon was a logical culmination of the American way of war. Making no difference between discriminate and indiscriminate killing – although justified by the reasons that led to it – was a further reflection of the deep unease inherent in the relationship between the American military establishment and its republican virtues.

An all-or-nothing approach to warfare did thus culminate in the use of the atomic bomb. Killing to precipitate the end of a war became the norm since it prevented the necessity of putting to test the American public endurance with regard to prolonged conflicts. Not only did overkilling become a norm in America's way of war, but also to the extent that it could bring a quick end to hostilities, then it was regarded as a strategic virtue. As Chief of Staff Mark S. Watson wrote in his official account of the Army history of WWII: "The efficient commander does not seek to use just enough means, but an excess of means. A military force that is just strong enough to take a position will suffer casualties in doing so; a force vastly superior to the enemy's will do the job without serious loss of men." (qtd. in Buley 22)

Likewise, Army General Douglas MacArthur opposed the deliberate restraint of force: "the concept of appeasement, the concept that when you use force you can limit that force. … To me that would have a continued and indefinite extension of bloodshed, which would have…a limitless end" (qtd. in Gacek 99). A limitless end means – rather than necessarily more enemy bloodshed – longer commitment of troops and a probability of casualties among them. For that to be prevented, no substitute for the use of crushing force to attain overwhelming cictory could ever be considered. That simply implies that war, once initiated, gained a momentum of its own and could no loger be

constrained by policy for politics and warfare became two exclusively different and separate realms.

Each of the American military services has claimed to be an embodiment of most of the elements of the American way of war. A general reading, however, of the distinct way in which each of these makes war shows that the US Army has focused mainly on the element of mass; the US Navy, the Marines have rather focused on mobility, while the US Air Force has mainly focused on the use of high technology. During the course of the Second World War, however, the US Army Air Force made use of a terrible synthesis. It consisted of a strategic bombing offensive, combining the three elements: the highest deployment of military technologies, unprecedented mobility of offensive power and mass destruction of enemy civilians, culminating in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This typical combination of the three elements of the American Way of War allowed the US Air Force to become the dominant service in America's national security during much of the Cold War (Kurth 54).

Although each of the three services has claimed to be representing the fourth element of the American Way of War, the will of the American people, a close observation suggests that only the US Army in practice has been used in a way and on a level that has necessitated substantial and sustained public support for its combat operations. Naval, marine and air force operations, on the other hand, have often been conducted without a large number of American casualties, which means that the President has always been able to carry them out without having to rely on extensive public support. Likewise, when it comes to the fifth element, which is reliance on the allied forces, it seems that, in practice, only the US Army has made use of it since it operated in a way and in theatres, which have necessitated allied support for its combat operations. The double reliance of

the army upon massive public support and extensive allied cooperation has made it, for the most part, the most diplomatically and politically sophisticated US military service (Kurth 54-5).

The pronounced advantages of the US in its reliance upon an amazing conjunction of overwhelming mass and a wide-ranging mobility; high technology weapons systems; considerable public support for its war efforts and the military presence of allied countries; this typical way of war made of the Twentieth Century an American century by excellence. This was forcefully validated by its epic victory in WWII. A victory that created and firmly established a US military paradigm that would persist into the twenty-first century despite the many challenges it would face. Challenges that would, in turn, give birth to major transformations within America's way of war. Such transformations had already started in an effort to make the American way of war a cleaner version of war via a specific way of fighting industrialized total twentieth century warfare. Despite its classical concentration on continental conflict between mass armies, a model of liberal militarism developed that dreamed of an air-centred war that would rely on high technology rather than mass armies in an attempt to decrease casualties. In addition to the massive land engagements with huge losses of life during WWII, however, air power also produced its own human slaughter of civilians and soldiers alike. The slaughter was due to the difficulty of precise targeting and to deliberate indiscriminate area bombing meant to break civilian moral (Shaw 4).

This culminated, as mentioned above, in the first US use of the atomic bomb in 1945, massively targeting the civilian population to force the Japanese government into surrender. Although that practice was largely deemed – inside and outside the USA – legitimate, as it was regarded as a necessary retaliation to atrocities committed earlier by the Axis powers, the dream of clean air warfare ultimately turned into degenerate war as it completely deviated from the agreed upon ideas and rules that war had to be fought among armed forces. Yet the possibility of

presenting it as a rational means to defeat the aggression of the Axis powers remained powerful and largely accepted and legitimized (Shaw 5).

WWII further enhanced the US basic idea underlying the strategy of annihilation: the difference and the separation between war and politics. American strategists' apoliticism was manifest in their relative disregard of the non-military outcomes of the war and their focus on the success of battles aiming at annihilating the enemy. The use of the absolute weapon came to vindicate the US penchant for total war based on the assumption that whatever political considerations have given rise to hostilities, as soon as war starts, these become totally irrelevant. That is so because, American strategists maintain, the outbreak of war per se is a result of the failure of politics and is a nullification of the Clausewitzean premise of the sovereignty of politics over war.

The immediate repercussion of the rejection of perceiving war as an instrument of policy and politics is the faulty separation of war and politics as well as the defective political utility of the use of force. Two US army planners criticised the US tendency during WWII to separate political concerns from military ones. At allied conference, they argued, the British outmanoeuvred the US because their war aims were,

> Based on national aims, have been clear-cut and understood by all concerned. In presenting their strategy and plans, they have had the benefit of a nicely integrated politico-economic-military planning organization developed by experience over a long period of time. On the other hand our own war aims have not been so clearly defined and the integration in our strategy of economic, and especially political factors with the purely military factors has not been so thoroughly effected. (qtd. in Buley 33)

The apoliticism inherent in the military's perception of warfare would soon be questioned and would have to be re-evaluated on the basis of new international and security data. The perception of war, its relationship to politics, and its political utility would all have to be revised to meet the new challenge.

Conclusion

War is a neat reflection of the society that wages it and of its cultural heritage. It also is an instrument of policy meant to serve and to be guided by superseding political objectives. For war to be effective, and not only justified, it must always submit its will to the will of politics.

In the United States of America, a distinct approach to warfare emerged and culminated in an American way of war based on a strategy of annihilation founded on the idea that industrial and technological capabilities determine the outcome of war. This strategy of annihilation was based on an absolutist mindset wherein the ultimate goal is a decisive military victory through the complete destruction of the enemy. An excess of means was used to assure a casualty-free and swift end of hostilities. Overkilling the enemy became the means to prevent public aversion to prolonged war and casualties.

The strategy was a perfect reflection of a sharp ambivalence in the relationship between the US republican culture and its military establishment. It also echoed the difference and the separation between war on the one hand and politics on the other, an apoliticism that was in essence the reverse of Clausewitzean conception of war as a continuation of politics. In other words, once initiated, the classical American war gained a momentum of its own and could no longer be constrained by policy or politics. The American Civil War was America's first war of annihilation, the Second World War its apotheosis. The US nuclear bomb dropped to end WWII marked the

culmination of America's strategy of annihilation. It was a flagrant demonstration of how degenerate warfare could become and of how US decision makers make use of war to achieve political objectives.

The extent to which this classical way of war could be effective to deal with a variety of crises that emerge out of different and specific socio-cultural backgrounds that in essence make use of dissimilar ways of war for divergent political objectives would soon be tested on the ground.

CHAPTER TWO

Vietnam: The Way to a New American Way of War

> We seem bent upon saving the Vietnamese from Ho Chi Minh, even if we have to kill them and demolish their country to do it. I do not intend to remain silent in the face of what I regard as a policy of madness, which, sooner or later, will envelop my son and American youth by the millions for years to come. —Senator George McGovern, speaking on the Senate floor on April 25, 1967.

Introduction

A peculiar American way of war was born out of the mixture of a European mindset and the specificities of the American experience and its republican political culture. The most dominant strategy underlining this way of war was a strategy of annihilation based on an all-or-nothing approach to warfare, where maximum force is used to crush the adversary swiftly. Decisive and impressive military victories were the response to the American public lack of stamina with regard to prolonged military commitments. The use of the nuclear bomb to close the Second World War (WWII) – the apotheosis of this classical way of war – gave the USA unprecedented advantage in the mastery of warfare. Yet The US classical way of war also reflected flaws and contradictions inherent in the very way military officers and policy makers perceived and used military force.

This chapter examines the different circumstances that, during the Cold War, put to test both the logic and the effectiveness of the strategy of annihilation and the absolutist mindset

underlining it. It starts with the first challenge to the nuclear supremacy of the United States, a powerful USSR that would not only surpass Washington in mass, but would soon develop its nuclear arm. The change in the balance of power and the new exigencies of the Cold War would necessitate a reformulation of strategy, while the prospect of mutual assured destruction would negate war in its traditional sense. The chapter then examines the transfer to limited warfare in Korea and then in Vietnam and exposes the defects inherent in the way Washington approached and dealt with the crisis in Indochina. It then scrutinizes the different repercussions of the debacle and how they led to a reformulation of strategy and the beginning of a series of military transformations.

2.1 The First Crisis: Mutual Assured Destruction

America's show of force in WWII and its magnificent victory gave a short-lived impression that it would reign supreme in the new international scene. The atomic bomb was an outstanding development, the most amazing ever since the mechanization of warfare and the introduction of military air power, submarines and aircraft carriers in WWI. Yet, soon, a contender to US hegemony proved powerful enough as to challenge its might and get its high uniformed officers think anew to develop a military strategy commensurate with such a new and magnificent strategic threat. The first manifestation of such challenges was a Soviet Union that could obviously surpass the USA in both men and material. An immediate revision of strategy was thus necessary to find a way to compensate for the loss of that US advantage in mass, in addition to reliance on naval power and mobility. High technology was the only way out; nuclear deterrence became the new US strategy in front of a USSR that clearly surpassed US mass and increasingly threatened its mobility. The A-bomb definitely closing WWII with a big bang over Hiroshima and Nagasaki was the evidence of an important transformation in America's way of war. A shift of weight among

the four elements of the classical way of war would give birth to a Cold-War way of war best exemplified in WWII. A way of war combining and enhancing the roles of mobility (particularly the navy) and high technology (particularly the air force), while at the same time reducing reliance upon the use of mass to a rather symbolic role. US public support for the national strategy of Containment and the military strategy based on nuclear deterrence was easy to obtain given the comparatively low cost in men and material it entailed (Kurth 54-8).

This US military advantage lasted until the USSR successfully tested its own atomic bomb in 1949 and signed a long-term treaty of cooperation and friendship with Communist China in 1950. Two months earlier the Chinese Communist armies had completed their conquest of mainland China. These three shockingly great events immediately and permanently changed the strategic landscape and as such necessitated new measures on the part of the USA (Kurth 54-8). The most dramatic implication of the marriage of the technological developments and the strategic environment is that they made "security now the final goal of policy rather than its starting assumption" (Huntington 113). The traditional term national defence was replaced with the more elastic term national security to cover a wider range and purpose of American strategic endeavours (Bacevich, *American Empire* 121). Even before American entry in WWII, President Franklin Roosevelt denounced the falsity of "some form of mystic [geographic] immunity that could never be violated," because technology had simply and totally "annihilated time and space" (qtd. in Sherry 32). The immediate implication was that the United States became a potential military target and as such, President Roosevelt assumed, "if the United States is to have any defence, it must have total defence. We cannot defend ourselves a little here and a little there" (qtd. In Sherry 33).

The first response to this dramatic challenge was National Security Council report number 68 (NSC-68), a document signed by the Truman administration and recommending the following:

> Our overall policy at the present time may be described as one designed to foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish. It therefore rejects the concept of isolation and affirms the necessity of our positive participation in the world community. This broad intention embraces two subsidiary policies. One is a policy…of attempting to develop a healthy international community. The other is the policy of containing the Soviet system.
>
> It was and continues to be cardinal in this policy that we possess superior overall power…. One of the most important ingredients of power is military strength. [It] is deemed to be essential for two reasons: (1) as an ultimate guarantee of our national security and (2) as an indispensable backdrop to the conduct of the policy of 'containment'. Without superior aggregate military strength, in being and readily mobilizable, a policy of 'containment' – which is in effect a policy of calculated and gradual coercion—is no more than a policy of bluff. (NSC-68 302-3)

The document stated that the United States was not getting back to its policy of isolation as it came to have then a big stake in a global stable environment. That was so because the cult of free security was no longer sustainable in a world where technology annihilated both time and distance as a hindrance to any military endeavour. The role of the Republic was first to develop what US policy planners viewed as a healthy global system – obviously constructed around America's vision and values – and, second to prevent any challenge to what they considered as the stability of this world. Containment was the policy that the US would pursue to stop Soviet and Communist advances. Possessing and sustaining a superior military strength was the only tool

possible to achieve the stated goals of guaranteeing national security and containing the new enemy.

In addition to the embrace of a leading global role, NSC-68 brought two major changes of policy. The first was the use of the wider concept of security instead of the more limited concept of defence. The second was the way military power was going to be used henceforth through "calculated and gradual coercion." In fact, the latter is particularly important in understanding the way war was going to be perceived of and used during the Cold War. The absolutist mindset relying on overwhelming annihilating force to obtain an unconditional surrender of the enemy seemed no longer an option with the novel nuclear dimension of warfare available to both the United States and the Soviet Union. This fact suggests that the apolitical approach to war so far adopted by military strategists could no longer serve the security goals of the time, and thus needed serious revision.

Some, however, acknowledged the fact that the perception within the US strategic circles of the nuclear weapon as a tool of deterrence rather than of war is a continuation of the sharp distinction between war and peace and a persistence of the apolitical approach to warfare. In 1961, George Kennan observed:

> The atom has simply served to make unavoidably clear what has been true all along since the day of the introduction of the machine gun and the internal combustion engine into the techniques of warfare. …that modern warfare in the grand manner, pursued by all available means and aimed at the destruction of the enemy's capacity to resist, is … of such general destructiveness that it ceases to be useful as an instrument for the achievement of any coherent political purpose. (qtd. in Mahnken 78)

The NSC recommendations were indeed convincing enough as to be immediately implemented. US military production was in 1953 seven times that of 1950; the army grew by fifty per cent and the air groups doubled to ninety-five (Saull 60). American high technology was meant to remain a basic element in the development of a commensurate military strategy aiming at containing Soviet and Communist threat. The hydrogen bomb (H-Bomb) would soon be developed together with new and faster kinds of delivery systems, jet bombers (the B-47) and later on missiles; and then the production of smaller and multiple nuclear warheads with destructive energy. The USSR and the USA were now engaged in a more than forty-year arms race in both quantity and quality of war technology (Kurth 55).

US military power and strategy during the Cold War were then to be governed by two major concepts. One was containment, a commitment through the Truman Doctrine[8] to defend "free people" against "communist subversion and aggression" (Truman, Address to a Joint Session), or, in other words, prevent Soviet and Communist expansion in Europe and the Third World. The second was deterrence, a strategy meant to dissuade the USSR and any other potential enemy from attacking the USA for the costs of such an attack would be lethal to both and to a big portion of humanity. Deterrence was centred on military preparations for a potential nuclear war. This option generated the idea of annihilating whole urban populations to the point of mutually assured destruction (MAD) and made it more and more difficult to perceive modern total wars with their nuclear dimension other than degenerate. All traditional constrictions on Clausewitz' absolute war, as perceived by the Americans, were at last removed and the complete realization of

[8] President Harry S. Truman announced the Doctrine to Congress on March 12, 1947. Historians use the speech to date the beginning of the Cold War. The doctrine further developed on July 4, 1948, when President Truman pledged to contain the communist uprisings in Greece and Turkey through financial aid to support their economies and militaries. It was then extended to include other nations thought to be under Soviet and communist threat. It eventually led to the foundation of NATO in 1949.

such a war seemingly became for the first time a practical possibility. Yet this very fact made war self-negating, self-defeating, and ultimately invalid as a means of policy. The modern American total war with its nuclear dimension faced a fundamental crisis; and strategy had consequently to focus on finding uses for war outside the total nuclear warfare (Shaw 5).

If force had to be used without the spectre of mutual destruction, then it had to be used in a limited way. Short of absolute war, limited war became the alternative, the only possible way war could be fought within the scope of deterrence. It was a war where major weapons could conceivably not be all employed, annihilation could possibly not be the strategy and hence unconditional surrender of the enemy could in no way be the objective of fighting. Conventional military powers rather than nuclear weapons would be used in the pursuit of specific political objectives (Greenberg 495). In other words, limited warfare was consistent with Clausewitzean war as a continuation of politics for if warfare were allowed to have its own logic, its own momentum then a thermonuclear war would eradicate both warring parties. Similarly, the very utility of force came to be questioned at the onset of the Cold War. Extreme caution had to be taken with regard to using force in the age of the atomic bomb.

Short of risking any direct confrontation against the USSR, the USA fought the Soviet Union in proxy wars. To face Soviet and Communist expansion, Washington took over the responsibility of supporting all countries resisting communism throughout the world. All of them eventually came to be considered vital to American interests: if one of these countries became communist, all its neighbours would follow. This came to be known as the Domino Theory. Consequently, the USA became involved in military interventions in the Third World. A series of such interventions in support of allied governments and -or- against revolutionary states would

begin with the American intervention in the Korean Civil War in 1950 and culminate in its involvement in Vietnam between 1965 and 1973 (Cox 69-131).

President Harry S. Truman broke the war-making tradition in the American Republic by deciding to send American troops into the Korean War without a declaration of war by Congress. He would later justify the decision of his administration to intervene by emphasizing the analogies between the North Korean armed aggression and the armed aggressions of Imperial Japan, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany in the 1930's (Truman, Truman Defends American Policy). The analogy stemed from Truman's perception of North Korean act as a conventional way of invasion, a way that gave it a character of military aggression across territorial boundaries, rather than the inevitable outcome of internal socio-economic, political and military dynamics. American military involvement in Korea between 1950 and 1953 was thus meant to prevent Communist North Korea from controlling democratic South Korea in order to prevent further communist expansion throughout Asia. The North Korean forces were driven back across the thirty eight parallel in what was a small and swift recapitulation of victorious US strategies in WWII. A successful combination of naval and air strikes together with an ultimate use of ground forces came to validate the effectiveness of the classical American way of war in restoring the independence and territory of South Korea (Kurth 59-62).

The Chinese intervention in the war, however, after the US and its allies' ground forces went well beyond the thirty eighth parallel and reached the Yalu River, south of the Chinese border compelled these forces to retreat south. The Chinese reaction announced a totally new war that the US policymakers were not willing to fight. The classical American way of war now endowed with a nuclear dimension could possibly not be adequate in front of a Chinese overwhelming mass backed up by the Soviet Union's own nuclear deterrence. The Korean War, with that new datum,

could no longer fit into the classical paradigm of the American way of war (Kurth 59-62). The logic of Politics decided how to fight the war and when to stop it. The US decision to retreat instead of pressing northward was in complete accordance with the war objective that was clearly set by the Joint Chiefs of Stuff: effecting "an end to the fighting…and a return to the status quo." (Hastings 229) Consequently, the stalemated war ended in negotiations between the two sides making it clear that political limitations were now an intrinsic part of US war strategy (Rigdway 145, 232). The Korean War inaugurated a new stance in American military interventions where wars came to be fought in a non-thermonuclear, unconventional way and with constant regard to political constraints.

In 1957 Henry Kissinger wrote a book in which he discarded overreliance on strategic nuclear weapons and derided "the secret dream of American military thought: that there exists a final answer to our military problem, that it is possible to defeat the enemy utterly and that war has its own rationale independent of policy"(25). He advocated a return to the limited wars fought in Europe before and after the time of Napoleon. The kind of war he had in mind involved "an attempt to affect the opponent's will, not to crush it, to make the conditions to be imposed seem more attractive than continued resistance" (140). This call for a calibrated used of force was validated by what many perceived as a military success in Korea as it proved that any realistic hope of limiting means depended on a limitation of objectives. In such wars, decisive victories are impossible to achieve because of the fear that the conflict might spread into a general worldwide conflagration. The aim of war could no longer be that of an utter destruction of the enemy. A strategy of annihilation in a nuclear bipolar world meant that any escalation without restraint would literally and inexorably lead to mutual assured destruction.

A strategy of calculated use of force was better fit with such situations as it allowed the USA to achieve its main political objective, namely preserving the territory and independence of South Korea, without escalating the war to nuclear weapons or expanding it into China and the Soviet Union. In this respect, US civilian defence intellectuals regarded Korea not as a war to be forgotten, because many Americans did not know how to think about it, but as a distinctive, impressive instance of how limited war could be used by the USA to fight and prevail against the forces of small Communist powers (Kurth 67).

This way of war, nonetheless, by no means represented the US army's view of how wars should be fought and won. Consequently, establishing the concept of limited war as the new US strategy necessitated a radical transformation in national security policy, one that would take into consideration the lessons that the Eisenhower administration and the defence intellectuals have drawn from the Korean War. Future US military endeavours would measure the extent to which the application of this strategy of limited war could be successful in both winning military adventures and reaching political objectives.

2.2 Vietnam: The Quagmire

The USA soon repeated the Korean military experience of limited war with its intervention in Vietnam. American involvement in Indochina started in 1950 through its support to the French. With the French departure in 1954, and the division of the country into a communist north and an anti-communist south (Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference), Washington took on the responsibility of creating a post-colonial independent anti-communist state in the south of Vietnam by providing financial and military support (Cox 73).

US commitment to Vietnam became increasingly militarized after the communist-led National Liberation Front[9] (NLF) launched an offensive against the Saigon regime in the South. It is worth noting here that the NLF assault or the upsurge in guerrilla activity in the south resulted from the arrest, torture and assassination of thousands of communists and suspected communists in the region by the Saigon regime in the months that had preceded the attack. In other words, it was the failure of the policies of the Saigon regime, rather than the expansion of communism per se, that drove the involvement of the USA in the area. The political and economic incompetence, the military ineptitude and the corruption of the Saigon regime all worsened the situation in the south after the NLF offensive (Cox 73-5).

Between 1961 and 1964, the USA tried to defeat the Communist insurgents in South Vietnam by providing military aid and advisors to the forces of the South Vietnamese government. As this effort was manifestly insufficient, and with the increase of American military involvement in Vietnam and of casualty figures, the USA decided to take the responsibility for directing the war in the countryside against the NLF instead of withdrawing and leaving Saigon to deal with what it regarded as the communist threat. The *casus belli* necessary for such a much bigger military commitment was provided with the Gulf of Tonkin incident, where North Vietnamese forces allegedly attacked American ships. This supposedly unprovoked act of aggression on the USA and its forces procured the basis for the blank cheque given by US Congress – The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution – to the Johnson administration in August 1964 (Schulzinger 255).

[9] The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, also called the Viet Cong, was an armed communist political revolutionary organisation in South Vietnam. It fought against the southern and US governments during the Vietnam War under the direction of North Vietnam. Its military force, the Liberation Army of South Vietnam (LASV), had both guerrilla and regular army units.

The resolution declared that the act "created a serious threat to international peace;" that it is "part of a deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression" against South Vietnam. Consequently, it approved and supported the president endeavours "to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force" to restore the "peace and security of the area" (The Tonkin Gulf Resolution). The Tonkin Gulf Resolution intensified the war through increasing the number of troops in South Vietnam (almost half a million in 1968) and through launching Operation Rolling Thunder – a set of bombing raids – on North Vietnam. It was a bloody war in the jungles of Southeast Asia where enormous and horrific levels of bombs and chemical weapons were dropped on the Vietnamese people in the north and in the south alike (Cox 74).

Following a US common tendency, the initial US military strategy in Vietnam was to rely on air power alone. The bombing of North Vietnam was supposed to deter and wear down the North's support of the Communist insurgents in the South, but these air strikes were limited to the small, southern part of Vietnam, and they soon proved insufficient to stop the growth of Communist strength in South Vietnam. Within a few months therefore, the Johnson administration decided to deploy large numbers of ground forces to South Vietnam and a full-scale US war in Vietnam began (Kurth 69). Despite such a huge deployment of American troops on Vietnamese ground to wage what Washington perceived as counter-insurgency battles, US strategists heavily relied, whenever possible, on air power; they actually made massive use of their air supremacy, bombing and inevitably killing civilians among whom guerrillas hid. That was done with the belief that cruel and extensive bombing campaigns including incendiary bombs (Napalm) and defoliant (Agent Orange), as well as a variety of conventional explosives, would, in time, bring North Vietnam to its knees (D. E. Schmidt 284). As in WWII, the use of air power in war came to symbolise, again, how degenerate a war can become.

President Johnson's successor, Richard Nixon, came to office in 1969 with a plan to end the war in Vietnam, the so-called "peace with honour" policy. The president and his national security adviser Henry Kissinger came up with a plan of "Vietnamization" of the war and of gradual withdrawal of the US forces. Both had to face a sheer stalemate where neither the massive bombing campaigns, nor any other option could produce the desired outcome, that of insuring a face-saving way out of Vietnam (Magstadt 143). The way in which the war was fought in Vietnam reflected the aversion to casualties and prolonged wars deeply seated in American culture. The commitment of the US military officers to the strategy of search-and-destroy, instead of pacification, emanated from their concern that a strategy of pacification would take too long and would require a stamina that the American public obviously lacked. Democracies can simply not indulge in prolonged military adventures. Consequently, General William Westmoreland undertook a strategy in Vietnam that was in thorough accordance with the apolitical tradition. He aimed at carrying the war to the enemy in a classical war of attrition by localising their positions, fixing all of them in place and then totally annihilating them with superior American firepower. His strategy of counter-insurgency was clear "we'll just go on bleeding them until Hanoi wakes up to the fact that they have bled the country dry to the point of national disaster for generations" (qtd. in Buley 30).

America was supposed to be building up South Vietnam; paradoxically, however, it was literally and physically tearing it into pieces. The destruction was visible everywhere in the region: the flames of burning villages and the denuded gigantic forest areas are only two examples of such destruction. And, as for its attempt to Vietnamize the war, the Vietnamese seemed to reject any assistance in becoming Vietnamese. The Vietnam War occurred in an age when old-style hundred and two hundred years' occupations belonged to a remote past. Washington knew right from the

onset of its involvement that one day, whether in five or twenty-five years, it would have to retreat its troops and cease its involvement in South Asia. When that would happen, the Vietnamese would run their country the way they see it fit. A relevant question is worth asking in this peculiar context: "how many American troops does it take to turn a country into itself?" (Schell 22)

According to many American military analysts, Vietnam exposed the defects inherent in the concept of limited war. General William Westmoreland, who commended US forces until 1968, blamed the "ill-considered" policy of "graduated response" (qtd. in Fergusson 196), which he believed had prevented a swift and decisive resolution of the conflict. General Bruce Palmer argued that "the graduated piecemeal employment of air power against North Vietnam violated many principles of war" (qtd. in Fergusson 196). Colonel Harry G. Summers blamed US military planners for exhausting the US army in a counterinsurgency effort by pursuing Vietcong guerrillas instead of leaving the fight to South Vietnamese troops and rather driving into Laos to seal off the enemy infiltration routes running south. Similarly, Secretary of Defence James Schlesinger later wrote that "one of the lessons of the Vietnamese conflict is that rather than simply counter your opponent's thrusts, it is necessary to go for the heart of the opponent's power; destroy his military forces rather than simply being involved endlessly in ancillary military operations" (qtd. in Fergusson 197). "The only reason to go to war," according to Admiral Thomas H. Moore, is "to overthrow a government you don't like" (qtd. in Fergusson 197).

The military generals later on blamed the civilian ill management of the conflict. A serious civil-military rupture was induced by the Vietnam War. From the military's perspective, stalemate and then failure in Vietnam had one simple reason: meddling civilians, civilians who, in essence, lacked military experience and knowledge of military history. The war, they argued, was not fought the way it needed to be fought. The officer corps blamed the politicians for poorly managing

the war and causing them to be stuck in a quagmire they had no hand in. By insisting that the struggle in Vietnam was *sui generis,* a conflict in which the time-honoured principles of war could not possibly apply, those politicians denied the soldiers the proper means to win that war (Bacevich, *American Empire* 238-40). US politicians needed to understand that overall civilian control of the military, as set by the Constitution, was one thing, while shackling professional uniformed officers with restrictions in professional matters imposed by civilians, who utterly lacked necessary military understanding, was another (Westmoreland 121). General Douglas MacArthur had already expressed similar concerns about the war in Korea in his Farewell Speech to Congress: "Once war is forced upon us, there is no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end. War's very object is victory, not prolonged indecision. In war there is no substitute to victory" (qtd. in Buley 33).

The adoption of limited war, as a way of war in Asia, was actually largely dictated by the lessons, which the Johnson administration and the defence intellectuals had learned from the Korean War. In Vietnam, like in Korea, a conventional war of attrition was used. A way of war that had to be limited to conventional weapons without the least spectre of escalation to nuclear ones, and that had equally to be limited with respect to territory and political considerations. The fear of a potential Chinese intervention effectively deterred the US from making use of its full power to win the war and condemned it to a long, gruelling and stalemated war (Kurth 60-70).

Although American military involvement in both Vietnam and Korea did have the same political objective, Vietnam was a different type of conflict. In Korea, it was a conventional war fought between two massive organized armies, the frontlines of which were relatively clear. Often-unclear lines, battles waged in muddy jungles and, most importantly, guerrilla-style assaults on US forces by civilian Vietnamese, however, characterized the Vietnam War. That was a kind of

insurgency the US military, trained, structured and equipped to wage large-scale conventional wars, was ill prepared to counter. What was meant by the USA to be a limited war in Southeast Asia, turned into a dragging conflict with enormous costs: in addition to the number of troops stationed in the area, Washington was spending around thirty-five billion dollars per year. The human cost was even larger: by the time the two sides signed a cease-fire in January 1973, 58,000 US soldiers had been killed (Cox 131), along with 2 million civilians from North and south and 1.1 million North Vietnamese and Viet Cong fighters (Loi 783).

Unlike Europe, Asia proved to be a theatre where US containment and deterrence of the Soviet and Communism expansion failed completely. Conventional war strategies and tactics were unexpectedly ineffective and the disconnection between military means and political ends almost total. The USA, a military superpower, suffered a humiliating defeat in front of a Third World country in East Asia. That was a serious blow not only to America's credibility in the world, a credibility it was trying hard to maintain through its prolonged involvement in Vietnam, but also to the American people's faith in both their political and military leaders. This political and military defeat led to a serious questioning of the way in which both policy makers and uniformed leaders had applied military power in the South Asian conflict. The strategy adopted in Vietnam was that of conventional limited war, which had nothing to do with counter-insurgency, as the only concern was relying on American military strengths including firepower and mobility to minimise US human casualties (Buley 36).

Furthermore, US policy in Vietnam was a failure in its own terms, according to Jonathan Schell, who was in Vietnam in the 1960's as a Newsweek reporter, for the simple reason that the political battle, the one that mattered most, was probably, on the American side, lost before it actually started. The Vietnamese politics were above all those of nationalism and independence

and this factor was decisive in winning the war against the USA. The National Liberation Front declared, “Politics forms the actual strength of the revolution: politics is the root and war is the continuation of politics” and, in another extract, “Our political struggle is the manifestation of our absolute political superiority and of the enemy’s basic weakness” (qtd. in Schell 24). For the Vietnamese, the outcome of the war would determine their survival as a nation, their very existence. They were willing to die for the sake of their national unity. What was at stake made endurance and then ultimate victory the only choice available to Ho Chi Minh and his compatriots. In his book *The War in Vietnam* Anthony O. Edmunds, relates a verbal exchange between a North Vietnamese colonel and an American officer:

> US officer—“You know, you never defeated us on the battlefield.”
>
> Vietnamese colonel—“that may be so, but it is also irrelevant.” (41)

In an era of limited warfare, war was no longer to be regarded as a mere physical contest between two opposing armies. America’s military superiority did not seem to make any difference in the outcome of the war. The very tenet of the American Way of War was completely destroyed by the Vietnam military experience. Waging a war in Southeast Asia against an enemy committed to national liberation demanded an ability to resolve deep-seated local and regional socio-political problems and that presupposed the use of long-term unlimited power. Military strategists were supposed to be simultaneously fighting a war and building a nation, which turned out to be impossible and ended up in the utter destruction of the very country Washington was supposed to be attempting to build. The USA actually failed to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese right from the beginning. Schell describes the “icy hatred” he saw in the eyes of the South Vietnamese when he was accompanying American forces on their search-and-destroy operations. It was clear that the USA failed to win the loyalty and the sympathy of a people it was supposed

to be protecting. The South Vietnamese army used to run away every time the fighting against the Northern army started. The US troops were fighting alone a war that was not theirs (22).

Another Vietnam veteran describes his disillusion:

> We're supposed to be saving these people and obviously we are not looked upon at the saviours here. They can't like us a whole lot. If we came into a village, there was no flag waving, nobody running out to throw flowers at us, no pretty young girls coming out to give us kisses as we march through victorious. 'Oh, here come [those] Americans again. Jesus, when are they going to learn?' (qtd. in Ferguson 96)

2.3 "No More Vietnams": The 1970's Lesson

The acute violence of the war, together with the difficulty of identifying and sparing Vietnamese civilians, fuelled a growing anti-war movement in the late 1960's. For the first time in the nation's history, television cameras brought the theatre of war into American homes. Images of bombed villages, burned children, and dead bodies flashed across the TV screen and gave real faces to the innocent Vietnamese victims of the war. The mass media was, for the first time in US history, playing a major role in foreign policy. The exploding media coverage exposed the real nature of the Vietnam War with its scale, length and moral ambiguity to the American public awareness (Magstadt 142).

Furthermore, the ambiguity about America's aims in Vietnam, lack of confidence that these could be achieved quickly and lack of conviction that those aims were worth prolonged sacrifice of American soldiers all led to massive protests. There was a popular consensus that Washington had to stop meddling in international conflicts, mind its own business and let other countries learn

to survive as best as they could on their own. It was a widespread consensus that Vietnam had been much more than a mere mistake, but fundamentally wrong and immoral (Ferguson 99-102). Vietnam demonstrated that, for democracies, a home turf could become a battlefield as well. It once more illustrated the importance of domestic consensus when American soldiers were sent abroad to fight and die. As a matter of fact, neither the American decision makers and the Pentagon nor the people could ever imagine losing a war to a Third World country like North Vietnam. The Indochina debacle ended the illusion of American invincibility. (Magstadt 143-4).

For a whole decade, the war had preoccupied the republic, drained the treasury, strained relations with America's allies, divided the country, and fuelled anti-American sentiment throughout the world. The US had fought in Vietnam a war entirely at odds with its own principle and ended up losing its prestige, in a world where prestige equated power, and becoming a discreditable example of the arrogance of power, that common tendency of great powers to always equate power with virtue and responsibilities with a universal mission. Vietnam gave birth to a long period of soul-searching and self-doubt; it is a standing rebuke to the use of power without principle or clear purpose. Like the old imperial powers, the US arrogated to itself the right to decide the destiny of a Vietnamese people Americans knew little, and cared less, about. The Vietnam War became a textbook case of how foreign policy must never be made and of how a war must never be fought (Magstadt 159-60).

Similarly, the nature of US military involvement in Vietnam demonstrated the limits of technology: that exclusive reliance on air power by itself was never enough, that wars were still won or lost on the ground. Yet neither the army nor the Air Force questioned the basic assumptions of the Vietnam War. While attempting to successfully apply air power to US advantage, air planners did rather develop a rigid prescription for success that disregarded such important

variables as definite war aims and the genuine nature of the enemy's military effort. Doctrine was directed toward a total war with the Soviet Union despite the fact that Vietnam was a preindustrial, exclusively agricultural nation (Buley 37). The US military ended up fighting the war on Vietnamese terms and helped them achieve their strategic aim of drawing "American units into remote areas and thereby facilitate control of the population of the lowlands," as a North Vietnamese General explained in the aftermath of the war (qtd. in Boot 303).

Vietnam was thus a watershed, not only in the history of the USA, but in the history of Western warfare as a whole. It was a moment when publics, both in the United States and in other countries, stood back from the kind of war that they had so far tolerated; and leaders realized that something had to be done because war could no longer go on in the same way. At this point, the model of limited war became as problematic as the model of absolute war that had reached its crisis in the nuclear arms race (Shaw 7). That was mainly so because American military strategists were approaching limited war with total war mindset, fighting a limited war, while still rejecting political restraints and refusing to assume that there might be an issue with their very way of always keeping the same doctrine when dealing with different kinds of military endeavours. Henry Kissinger had rightfully observed that the Americans "added the atomic bomb to [their] arsenal without integrating its implications into [their] thinking. Because [they] saw it merely as another tool in a concept of warfare which knew no goal save total victory, and no mode of war except all-out war" (12).

The overall US military involvement in Vietnam became an unconsciously reactive endeavour that reflected ambiguity and confusion in the very premise the war was fought on. It was a further flagrant demonstration of a persisting apolitical approach to international conflicts that fell short of allowing Washington to play the self-allotted role of world champion of

democracy and liberalism. Vietnam was a further squandered opportunity for restoring the political utility of using force as a means of policy and as a continuation of politics by other means. It was an additional step in the perception of war as unequivocally separate from politics and as an undertaking that once initiated developed a logic of its own. It also was a revelation of the lack of authentic commitment on the part of US policy makers to a real understanding of the dynamics and of the socio-political environment within which international crises occur. The dragging conflict, the huge cost, the chaos did in no way have both US policymakers and military men rethink and reconsider the very end they were fighting for, the very strategy they formulated and the very tools they were using in Vietnam. The war exposed the flaws inherent in the perception of both conflicts and the way force needed to be used to bring them to an end.

The Vietnam War had, consequently, serious implications on the conceptualisation of military power in the USA. In 1970, President Nixon reflected the views that the USA was overextending itself and that it could not possibly afford to protect all peoples in the world fighting communism, when he declared that the USA would keep on assisting its friends militarily and economically, but that those nations would have to take their own security in charge. Each ally had now to assume primary responsibility for its own defence, rather than depend on American military intervention (Nixon). That declaration was an implicit acknowledgement of the fact that there inherently were limits to US military might and what it could accomplish (Fisher 131). From now on, the USA would fight only when its national interests were at stake. Indochina, as George F. Kennan and Arthur J. Schlesinger Jr. came to discern had been of marginal strategic importance to the USA (Ferguson 101). As such and as a reaction to the Vietnam War experience, the Nixon doctrine sought to avoid any future US direct military involvement.

When a Democratic president, Jimmy Carter, won the elections of 1976, he followed the same path. His administration clearly understood the political, economic and strategic implications of Vietnam on the USA. “No more Vietnams” was the lesson it drew from the war. This did not only involve the deployment of ground forces in Asia, but also their deployment against revolutionary guerrilla movements anywhere. Throughout the 1980’s the Democrats in the American Congress continued to adhere to this position. “No more Vietnams” stemmed from the Vietnam Syndrome, meant to refer to the fact that, after the trauma of defeat, the American people would no longer back precarious foreign interventions. After all, the defeat was an anomaly in a two-century military history that had witnessed only victories, except for the war of 1812 (Buley 63). The loss per se, in addition to the memories of war scandals, of protests and riots and of images of killed and wounded American soldiers led the American people to distrust any further war that would probably be another Vietnam. The Vietnam quagmire came to haunt American policy makers and military men and hamper any further US military involvement in other wars (Fisher 131). The syndrome actually became an integral part of American culture and rendered it suspicious to the very utility of force. Use of military might to reach political objectives became obsolete. The syndrome, thus, resulted in US reluctance to send its troops into combat situations overseas unless a few conditions, regarding both the possibility and the manner of US military involvement, were redefined.

“No more Vietnams” was a flagrant reflection of flaws inherent in the strategy underlining US war making. It exposed limits to both expectations and attitudes associated with the way American politicians and military officers made war. Both military and civilian strategists started questioning their own basic assumptions about the nature of war. Both theory and practice had to be revisited. Vietnam also posed once again the central dilemma of the nuclear age: how to restore

the now defective political utility of force. Whether excluding political constraints from consideration and resorting to overwhelming force to obtain unconditional surrender, or attempting to rather calibrate the degree of force applied to the limited political objectives through the gradual escalation of American strategic bombing, the way the use of military force was approached by US strategists proved immensely defective. While exclusively focussing on the technical side of the war or on the extensive use of firepower, Vietnamese politics, culture and history had been totally ignored (Buley 61-2).

Whether these flaws stemmed from the way in which nuclear deterrence came to shackle American war-making capability, or from the overall US perception of the use and political utility of force, it was high time American politicians and military men reconsidered their perception of strategy. The Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage defined military strategy as "the art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force, or the threat of force." (qtd. in Weigley xii) Essentially, reviewing the history of US military strategy from the birth of the nation through the Second World and until Vietnam, shows that an American strategic culture based on history, geography, and political tradition and relying on the mobilization of vast material resources to grind down an adversary with firepower and mass prevailed. This American way of war was based on a strategy of annihilation. Except in a few historical instances where American military resources were still slight, or in cases where use of overwhelming force was not an option, American strategists employed a way of war centred on the desire to achieve a crushing military victory over an adversary. It also tended to stress military factors at the expense of the broader political goals of the war. This had always been the way American policy makers and military men perceived war, an alternative to bargaining, rather than a part of the bargaining political process. (Weigley xvii)

This suggests that the American concept of war was limited to winning battles and campaigns rather than including the much more important goal of turning military victory into strategic success. It was a narrow, strictly military definition of strategy that did not take into account the real concern of strategy, which is "the application or maintenance of force so that it contributes most effectively to the achievement of political objectives" (Buchan 81- 2). The USA had, until the Cold War, no national strategy for the use of force or the threat of force to attain political ends except during actual use of force when the only objective pursued was complete military victory. Thus, the only sort of military strategy making use of the armed forces tended to be the most direct kind of military strategy, used in war. That is so because Washington did not meddle in international politics constantly enough or with enough consistency of rationale to allow the development of a "coherent national strategy for the consistent pursuit of political goals by diplomacy in combination with armed forces" (Weigley xix). A logical corollary of this situation was the way it contributed to the concept of civilian predominance over the military in the American government; the fact that the military themselves perceived strategy as narrowly military in content proportionally reduced their temptations to intervene in the making of national policy.

American soldiers had indeed an even narrower perception of strategy as they were taught to see it as "the art of bringing forces to the battlefield in a favourable position" (Weigley xviii). This traditional perception of war gave birth to a narrow, purely military definition of strategy. One important implication of this definition, in addition to the fact that the use of the word was almost totally confined to strictly military affairs, is the idea that no consideration was given to any non-military consequence of what military strategists were doing, the real purposes for which a war was fought. In other words, military victory, through the overthrow of the enemy, was the objective per se. Nothing changed during the nuclear age, despite claims of reformulating strategy

and adopting limited war as a substitute for total war, the absolutist mindset persisted and came to echo both flaws and contradictions in the manner war had been used before and even during the Vietnam War.

American strategists admit that the way in which they were formed lacked a broad vision that goes beyond the immediate outcome of the war, which is the quick and decisive victory. Army General Albert C. Wedemeyer, who studied at the German War College between 1936 and 1938, wrote about the issue with his education as a strategist in the USA. He expressed the idea of how limited it was, and how only thanks to his assignment in Germany, could he at last acquire a "broad concept of strategy embracing political, economic and psychological means for the attainment of war aims" rather than the "narrower concept of strictly military science," which he had studied in the USA (49). Similarly, more than two decades later, the military sociologist Morris Janowitz was stuck by the flagrant lack of coordination between policy and military action when he assessed the state of military education in 1960: "The curriculum does not focus on specific political consequences – past, present, or future – of military action. … In fact, none of the war colleges focuses on the management of political warfare – that is the practices involved in the co-ordination of military action with political persuasion" (qtd. in Buley 34).

This deliberate apolitical bias had dysfunctional effects on the conduct of those types of conflicts that did not fit the classical cultural conception of war against a conventional adversary in which the US could simply apply crushing force without political constraints. Those basic assumptions could not be used in such categories as limited war, low intensity conflict and counter-insurgency. That was the precise reason why the USA failed in Vietnam. Richard Betts defines counter-insurgency as "a delicate interweaving of political and military functions – the kind of

fusion that irritated so many of the military elite who preferred a clear line of demarcation between the two spheres" (qtd. in Buley 34).

The only military service to regard small wars or low intensity conflicts including counter-insurgency as an integral part of their identity and mission, historically speaking, were the Marine Corps as their primary purpose has always been utilizing force in support of diplomacy (Buley 35). In their *Small Wars Manuel,* published in 1940 on tactics and strategies for engaging in small wars, the service opposed the mainstream strategic thought underlining US military interventions. It stressed the sovereignty and primacy of policy through the use of force as an instrument of politics, the limitation of objectives of war, minimising the number of troops deployed in warfare so that power would be demonstrated rather than overwhelmingly used, and utilizing force as an effective means of political persuasion or dissuasion (U.S Marine Corps).

The Army also had a long tradition of small wars including the nineteenth century frontier wars against the Native Americans and the Philippine Insurrection of 1899-1903, but it never managed to learn from its experience and to institutionalise it. Every time the army was faced with a counter-guerrilla confrontation, it repeatedly found itself virtually with no institutional memory of such military experiences, had to relearn on the battleground appropriate tactics at extravagant costs, and yet ended up after each episode regarding it as a mere aberration that must never be repeated (Buley 35).

A serious and careful reconsideration of the way America makes war became not only necessary, but also urgent in the aftermath of Vietnam. A review that necessitated taking into consideration the different aspects of war as a whole, never losing from sight the clear political objective meant to be achieved. It had to embody the idea that the force of arms was not meant to be used for a short-term military objective, but for a political definitive result, since war by essence

is the continuation of politics by other means, not an alternative to politics. The American Way of War during the nineteenth and twentieth century payed exclusive attention to the tactical way a battle was to be fought, to ensure crushing the adversary and obtaining an overwhelming military victory. Even when reality refused to conform to the strategic perception, most politicians and military officers did make no efforts to regard the use of overwhelming force other than the only available option. Unconventional or limited warfare did make no exception.

2.4 Deciphering the Vietnam Lessons

During his 1980 presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan vowed that the Americans were "not a warlike people;" that they "seek to live in peace" and that they do "resort to force infrequently and with great reluctance—and only after [they had] determined that it is absolutely necessary." Nevertheless, he went on, Americans should learn proper lessons from their past military adventures: "America has gone to war, bleeding the lives of its young men into...the jungles and rice paddies of Asia." Americans "cannot learn these lessons the hard way again without risking [their] destruction." (Reagan's Critique of Carter's Foreign Policy)

The Republican nominee promised a strong America through a fast rearmament process that would restore American pre-eminence. Once elected President of the USA in 1981, an eight-year process of transformation began. President Reagan and his Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger inaugurated a new era of strategic reform; they were intent on reversing the course of the last fifteen years through an assertive foreign policy stance. The first step towards such an aim was to face and overcome the Vietnam syndrome that had paralyzed the Carter administration in the last years (Schulzinger 331-3).

Proclaiming that the Vietnam syndrome was over, the President, a staunch anti-Communist, decided to aggressively defend Washington's right to intervene anywhere in the world to combat communist insurgency; he immediately embarked on a concerted effort to roll back communism in the Third World (Chafe 477). The Reagan Doctrine, as it came to be labelled, was based on the premise of leading the forces of freedom against the "Satanic" forces of Communism, "the evil empire". It was a matter of moral superiority, a struggle of "good versus evil, right against wrong." (Reagan, Evil Empire Speech)

On September 14, 1982, a civil war broke in Lebanon after the assassination of the newly elected Bashir Gemayal, leader of the Christian Phalange Party. Immediately after, Israel occupied Muslim West Beirut and a Christian militia slaughtered between two hundred and eight hundred Palestinian refugees. US Marines were sent right away to the region as part of a larger multinational force. Washington did not precise the purpose of the force with enough clarity, nor did it state how long that force would remain in the midst of the increasingly dangerous civil war (Schulzinger 343). The Department of Defence and the Joint Chiefs vigorously resisted military intervention in Beirut for that kind of mission was judged only peripheral to the national interest. Besides, a low-intensity conflict required nation-building efforts and, consequently, could in no way fit with the traditional American way of war based on the overwhelming force paradigm (Buley 75).

Yet, the intervention took place in Lebanon and it was done within the global dynamic of the Cold War. The Middle East made no exception to the way US foreign policy came to be defined under the Reagan administration. It was a hard-line realistic approach that subsumed all

preferences and morality concerns within Henry Kissinger's ethic of responsibility[10]: American interests were straightforward: in the face of the Soviet threat, the USA was under the obligation of maximizing its interests, which were defined as power[11] (Gaddis 221). The area had to simply be divided between the two superpowers for allies and dominance. This realistic simplicity of Washington's foreign policy entirely contradicted with the inherent complexity of the struggles within the Middle East, however. The immediate result was a misperception of those same struggles as a tool or as a product of Soviet interference. The Cold-War prism was thus distorting the basis to policy making within the Middle East as President Reagan was exclusively focussing on combating the military threat of what he termed the evil empire. The Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab nationalism, Islamist extremism and other regional dynamics specific to the region were all downgraded in the face of Pr. Reagan's renewed Cold War (Dodge 207-8).

Initially welcomed by many Lebanese as peacekeepers, the Marines would soon fuel resentment from Shiite Muslims and Syrians, who also had troops in Lebanon. By analysing the situation in Lebanon through a Cold War lens, the US force ended up being employed to back one side against another, especially after a suicide squad bombed the US embassy in Beirut killing seventeen Americans. The US force had now taken sides with the Christian factions and was shelling Muslim and radical positions. In retaliation, on October 23, suicide bombers driving trucks loaded with TNT blew up the American Marine headquarters near Beirut Airport. Two hundred and forty-one marines and navy personnel were killed in the assault (Schulzinger 343). The ensuing withdrawal of the US forces seemed to have confirmed the post-Vietnam military

[10] The idea was first expressed by Max Weber in "Politics as a Vocation", published in 1919. It refers to the-day-to day need to use force in a way that preserves the peace for the greater good.
[11] The concept of interest defined in terms of power means that the policies and actions of a nation are always governed by national interest; with the idea of national interest being the essence of politics and being unaffected by the circumstances of time and space.

conviction that the American public lacked war stamina when it came to cases where no vital national interest was at stake (Buley 75).

Defining interests as power and employing them within the global bipolar context led to profound miscalculations in the Middle East about which regimes, or which factions to support. The USA took sides in a complex bloody civil war in Lebanon, paid a terrible price and exacerbated violence in the country. It was ultimately forced to leave Lebanon in defeat and trauma (Dodge 208). The US force had been sent to Lebanon to allegedly accomplish a peace-enforcement mission, and because of the vaguely defined purpose, ended up becoming a prominent target for the various factions in the civil war. The chaotic violence in Lebanon was so complex that it could possibly not be brought under control by any outside military force. US policymakers have seemingly not yet assimilated the lessons of Vietnam.

The Reagan Doctrine[12] was mainly the basis of US foreign policy in the Caribbean and Central America; where Washington actively backed freedom fighters; a freedom fighter would be anyone seeking to overthrow a Marxist dictatorship—that is any regime linked to Moscow and Cuba. Consequently, Washington became militarily involved in a series of guerrilla insurgencies in the region. The Reagan administration was intent on erasing the memory of Vietnam by confronting leftists in Central America and the Caribbean. (Magstadt 158)

The first of such military interventions took place in the Caribbean, the *de facto* American sphere of influence. A few days after the disastrous attack against the US marines in Lebanon, President Reagan decided to invade Grenada. Operation Urgent Fury was conducted against the

[12] Stated by President Donald Reagan on February 6th, 1985 in his State of the Union Address, the doctrine states: "we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives – on every continent from Afghanistan to Nicaragua – to defy Soviet supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth." Under this doctrine, the USA provided overt and covert aid to anti-communist guerrillas and resistance movements, labelled 'freedom fighters'.

Marxist government of the country, which had ousted the constitutional government in Grenada, leading to unrest and violence as protesters clashed with the new government. Citing the danger of the situation to the 1,000 US citizens in Grenada, President Reagan deployed a 2,000 force that would be later augmented to 6,000. The operation ended in quick and easy victory and in the establishment of a democratic government in Grenada, but led once more to a serious questioning of Washington's use of military power to achieve its goals (United States Invades Grenada).

Two military interventions in one week illustrate American foreign policy under President Reagan. The first turned into a tragedy, and, it later turned out, the decision to intervene in Lebanon was taken by the President despite Pentagon opposition. The second, allegedly aiming at protecting American medical students, was in reality meant to eliminate Cuban influence on the island. Many questions were asked as to the necessity and the wisdom of deploying US troops, a few days after the killing of 241 Americans in Beirut, to invade a tiny island (Chafe 478-9). Both interventions took place within the US foreign policy stance attempting to concretely show up that the Vietnam syndrome had actually disappeared and that the USA could now make use of its force, in a limited way, to secure its interests in the face of an "evil empire".

The memories of the Vietnam War were still alive, however, especially among military officers, who became reluctant to intervene abroad, unless a clear framework regulating the use of force was established. Revamping military strategies on the basis of the lessons learnt from the failure in Vietnam, to avoid any potential recurrence of the debacle, and to restore the credibility of the United States and of its military in the world and in the eyes of its own public was a matter of necessity. It was high time the military strategists distilled the lessons they had learned from Vietnam into a military doctrine that would redefine the conditions and the manner the USA would

go to war. The doctrine would be both a political and a military insurance that no other Vietnam would ever occur again.

Thoughtful army leaders in various army think tanks, thus, including the Army War College, took on the endeavour of formulating a profound, explicit, comprehensive and elaborate doctrine that would, from now on, set up clear strictures on any future deployment of US forces abroad. The aim was to preclude any potential recurrence of the calamity that had befallen the US military in Southeast Asia, by giving military power its proper utility within American foreign policy. The debacle in Vietnam had actually engendered a clear divide between the military and the civilian over the use of force: whether to intervene or not depended to a desperate degree on the fickleness of the American public. The traditional military sensitivity to the rigid limits imposed on military action by a republican culture were further enhanced by the Vietnam syndrome, which in the words of Brian Holden Reid became "a kind of pre-emptive cringe". (qtd. in Buley 64)

Consequently, in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy in Lebanon and of the US invasion of Grenada, and in an attempt to re-orient concern towards the existing social imperatives, Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger publically revealed the terms of a new doctrine. The dogma was meant to redefine the uses of American military power. In a speech he delivered at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., Caspar Weinberger exposed a set of guidelines codifying the military's own conclusions about Vietnam and revealing an allegedly new conception of the political dimension of war. Indeed, by articulating those military guidelines into a doctrine, and by publically announcing them, Weinberger was fixing his personal seal of approval to these parameters hence giving them both legitimacy and weight of policy (Bacevich, "Elusive Bargain" 240). In his memoirs, Weinberger expressed his opposition to the National Security staff's habit

of "spending most of their time thinking up over more wild adventures for [US] troops." (qtd. in Buley 65) The second architect of the doctrine was Weinberger's top military aid, Colin Powell, a Vietnam veteran who belonged to a generation of young officers who had served in Indochina. Powell wrote, "Many of my generation, the career captains, majors and lieutenant colonels seasoned in that war vowed that when our time came to call the shots, we would not quietly acquiesce in half-hearted warfare for half-backed reasons that the American people could not understand or support" (Powell and Persico 149).

After explaining the reasons for which such a doctrine had to be formulated, Caspar Weinberger first enunciated a set of preconditions for committing US forces abroad. The doctrine permits intervention only when "vital national interests were at stake;" only in the pursuit of "clearly defined political and military objectives;" the relationship between ends and means "must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary;" only with prior "reasonable assurance" of popular and Congressional support; and only "as a last resort", when all diplomatic measures had failed. Second, the formula insisted that once the civilians decided on war, it became incumbent upon them to allow soldiers a free hand in fighting it. "If we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the US forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all" (Weinberger). In succeeding years, another precondition became widely accepted as part of the doctrine—all US deployments must have an exit strategy (Boot 319).

Under the terms of this doctrine, wars would take place infrequently and end swiftly and tidily. While setting out to reinvent warfare, the US uniformed leaders returned to the style of warfare they are most comfortable with, that is conventional warfare against armies organized and

equipped along clearly defined lines. In other words “an all-or-nothing approach to warfare with the ideal war being one in which the US wins with overwhelming force, suffers few casualties and leaves immediately” (Boot 319). The doctrine came to reinforce and show up the officer corps’ distaste of people’s protracted and ambiguous war, saturated with political complexity and their preference for the classical American way of war. A way of war based on the clash of opposing armies, and where campaigns and battles directed by military elites (not civilians), determined the outcome of the war (Bacevich, “Elusive Bargain” 241).

The doctrine explicitly adopted the Clausewitzean ideas of war and adapted them to the exigencies of the post-Vietnam era. The adaptation took the form of a pragmatic selective concern with those aspects of Clausewitzean theory that would confirm the lessons learned from Vietnam. The doctrine did for instance accept the premise that the political dimension is sovereign over the military dimension of war, that war’s logic is that of policy, when it accentuated the importance of clearly defined political objectives and the necessary continuous reassessment of the relationship between ends and means. It was a return to the overwhelming-force paradigm based on the idea that military means are to be directed to the achievement of political ends. Nevertheless, the apparent risk-aversion of the new doctrine suggests the persistent impact of the distrust of the military for the limited application of force and its emphasis on the unpredictable ‘grammar’ of war and how it tends to overwhelm the logic of policy. In other words, it was a reconstruction of the earlier paradigm of the traditional American way of war that the military believe had been betrayed in Vietnam. This is especially visible in the new doctrine’s insistence that use of force should be the last resort and that it becomes an option only when vital national interests are at stake. It is a clear continuation of the idea that war is an alternative to politics and that it takes over only when politics fail. In this respect, war is not a continuation of politics as Clausewitz had

stated, but a mere indication of its failure. The demand that there had to be a "clear intention of winning" is a clear symptom of the military's aversion to the way in which force had not been allowed to be overwhelmingly used in Vietnam, but limited for the sake of negotiating and communicating. The Weinberger/Powell Doctrine reaffirmed the rejection of a deliberate limitation of force and the inclination to muster an effective overwhelming margin of superiority to guarantee a decisive victory (Buley 67).

Evidence that such a doctrine became perfect common sense in American strategic thinking would soon unfold. The success of US military invasions of Grenada in 1983 and of Panama in 1989 stemmed from Washington's use of overwhelming force. The disastrous outcomes of Desert One – the Iranian hostage rescue mission in 1980 – and of the peacekeeping mission to Lebanon in 1983, ending in the death of 241 marines, however, stemmed from the insufficient force used to achieve such ambitious objectives (Boot 319). In a 1995 interview, Colin Powell termed his approach of effective military superiority "the bully's way of going to war" (qtd. in Buley 67). Caution was thus much more important than efficiency when going to war. The doctrine, therefore, brought back the premise of overwhelming force, explicitly accepting the primacy of political objectives, but at the same time re-endorsing the traditional American model of war thus somehow reversing the Clausewitzean ideal of political primacy. In fact, the emphasis on the clarity of objectives means that political objectives must be formulated in such a way as to neatly guarantee their achievement with the use of force. In other words, military means do determine the shaping of political ends rather than the reverse. The lessons of Vietnam allowed the military to more readily accept the Clausewitzean sovereignty of politics over war, but did not change their traditional belief that the 'messy' ambiguity of politics should not meddle with the conduct of war; the only way to do that is by separating as far as possible specific military concerns from broader

political considerations. The ‘new’ criteria for the use of force assured once more a neat separation of political and military dimensions and hence could evade both the necessity and the full implications of the premise that war is a continuation of politics (Buley 67).

The civilian strategist Albert Wohlstetter rightly remarked in 1968: “of all the disasters of Vietnam, the worst may be the ‘lessons’ that we draw from it” (Brodie 114). In fact, the lessons learned from Vietnam were already becoming as controversial as the war itself. Caspar Weinberger and Colin Powell both believed that the only way susceptible of kicking the Vietnam Syndrome out of the nation’s memory was acknowledging that the US republican culture imposes rigid limits on the use of military force abroad. The next step would be an attempt to realign within those same limits in such a way as to allow for the links between the American people and their military to be restored. Many, however, including Albert Wohlstetter, regarded this stance as extremely close to the anti-war movement, as a kind of new isolationism. A group of technology enthusiasts, including military scientists and civilian strategists, rejected the premise of admitting and deferring to republican limits on the political utility of force to exorcise the Vietnam ghosts. They rather advocated embracing the ongoing technological advances that were already underway during the Vietnam War for the sake of exercising force with bigger efficiency and less sacrifice from the American public (Buley 91). In the meanwhile, a set of military transformations already underway were smoothing the transition, previously imposed by the Vietnam quagmire, to a new way of making war.

2.5 Towards a New American Way of War: The End of the Draft

For such ambitious military and political aims to be obtained, it became, once again, incumbent upon US policy makers to bring a proportionally radical, large-scale and far-reaching transformation in the actual way war is fought on the ground. The first transformation that took

place in the military was putting an end to the compulsory military service. The federal government had employed conscription or the 'draft' as it is commonly known in the USA, during the American War of Independence, the Civil War, WWI, WWII and the Cold War. Compulsory military service and the sheer mass mobilization were then hallmarks of the American Way of War (Quester 114). From 1940 to 1973, male US citizens were drafted to fill vacancies in the US Armed Forces during both peacetime and periods of war. During the Vietnam War, however, and even though draftees made up only 25% of the total US military, they accounted for more than half of the army's battle casualties. This caused the draft to become increasingly dreaded and unpopular in the USA and further boosted the anti-war movement. In response to the anti-war protests' focus on the draft, Pr. Nixon promised to end it and in March 1969 established the Gates Commission or the Commission on All Volunteer Force, which released a report recommending an end to the draft in February 1970. Eventually the US Congress refused to extend the draft law causing it to end in July 1973 (Britannica).

When President Donald Reagan came to power in 1981, the atmosphere was filled with aversion to US overseas military commitments and in particular to the human cost inherent in such commitments. The fall of Saigon, the prospect of falling dominoes around the world led to significant doubts in America's ability to now compete in contests of resolve with communist opponents. Washington was seemingly losing rather than winning the Cold War. The new administration, intent on restoring America's strength and on overcoming the Vietnam Syndrome, decided to maintain the Nixon experiment with the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) (Quester 115). President Reagan perfectly knew that if he had to commit US forces overseas, he needed first to guarantee that the troops he would deploy had been in the army by their own will. Casualties were still a cost that Americans were not willing to pay, especially casualties among draftees.

The termination of compulsory military service in favour of the All-Volunteer Force system has come to govern military recruitment ever since. It was the politician's solution to the problem of having to call to service those citizens who were in no way willing to fight the nation's coming wars. Citizen-soldiers mass armies were the best option for wars that needed mass mobilisation, but quite inappropriate in an era of limited wars (Buley 70). As for the Army leaders, the point was to learn how to recruit high quality soldiers, how to pay for them and how to keep them in the army. The government needed to find enough money to offer a competitive wage that would allow it to recruit and retain the best soldiers. The US army had to learn new leadership and training methods including *esprit de corps*[13] and professionalism to motivate soldiers instead of relying on harsh punishment to impose discipline upon them. Many of the negative aspects of Army life had to be eliminated, including the non-military menial tasks that the draftees were obliged to perform. Soldiers had now more time to train and improve their skills, and the US Congress authorised pay raises and enlistment bonuses for both soldiers and recruiters (Griffith 70, 76).

A military in which those serving have volunteered rather than having been conscripted was a much better option because of the morale and motivation inherent in the very choice of belonging to the army. Longer-term service was another important advantage of AVF as it enabled those uniformed citizens to improve both training and quality of life. Military service has also become, given the improved quality of soldiers, an asset in the job market once a soldier has returned to civilian life. Problems arising from a larger integration of female-service members within the All-Volunteer army (sexual harassment and improper social relationships between

[13] The common spirit existing in the members of a group and inspiring enthusiasm, pride, devotion and strong regard for the honour of the group.

soldiers), resulted in controversy. Over time however, the Army introduced new regulations and policies to allow the predominantly male force adjust to the growing number of female soldiers, and ended up proving a tremendous success (A Soldier by Choice).

Yet, for a Pentagon quite suspicious since the Vietnam debacle of the politicians' willingness to send troops to harm's way without the backing of the American public, it was momentous to insure that the AVF would not be a means to undertake whatever imperial adventures policy makers wanted to entangle in. Consequently, under the supervision of Army Chief of Staff Creighton Abrams, a conscious attempt was made so as to design the structure of the army in such a way as active-duty forces would have to always depend on the reserves for such critical functions of support as military police, engineers and civil affairs. Known inside the Pentagon as the "Golden Handshake", this arrangement was meant to insure that, in case of a major crisis, the military would not be able to function without the reserves, the mobilisation of which, even temporarily, cannot take place without a presidential proclamation. This was meant to guarantee that every military action would incite intense political debate. The Abrams Doctrine was thus a compromise between the American traditional ideal of citizen-soldier on the one hand and the imperative for military professionalization on the other and at the same time a guarantee for no further employment of US forces abroad without popular support (Buley 71). General John Vessey described Abram's thought: "Let's not build an Army off here in the corner someplace. The armed Forces are an expression of the Nation. If you take them out of the national context, you are likely to screw them up. That was his lesson from Vietnam. He wasn't going to leave them in that position ever again" (qtd. in Buley 71).

This Combat Force policy aimed at transforming a solely citizen-soldier army into a professional force supported by the American public by institutionalising the Army's dependence

on the reserves. It was at the same time an institutionalisation of the new orientation of the military culture, after Vietnam, towards societal imperatives. In 1976, Army Chief of Staff General Fred C. Weyand, who had supervised the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam, eloquently described the context within which the US military operated:

> Vietnam was a reaffirmation of the peculiar relationship between the American Army and the American people. The American Army really is a people's army in the sense that it belongs to the American people who take a jealous and proprietary interest in its involvement. When the Army is committed, the American people are committed. In the final analysis, the American Army is not so much an arm of the executive branch as it is an arm of the American people. The Army therefore cannot be committed lightly. (qtd. in S. C. Williams 13).

AVF and the ensuing Abrams compromise were the first of a set of radically significant transformations within the US Army. Being the central military service to fight the Vietnam War, the Army did suffer the bulk of the costs and casualties and came close to a total collapse of service morale. Drawing lessons from the war was thus a matter of critical importance. The war had been disorienting in every possible way. Having failed in preserving the independence and territory of South Vietnam, and having conducted the war in a way that clearly contradicted the classical American way of war with its overwhelming force paradigm, the army was willing to do its best to prevent such an ordeal from ever happening again. No more Vietnams and no more land wars against guerrilla forces, whatever their nature was, were allowed (Kurth 72). That however, did in no way mean that Washington was not willing to fight anymore. A land war in Europe, for instance, against the Soviet Union was an option the US army was willing to consider. What kind of strategy could possibly allow the US to not only contain, but, if possible, also trump a Soviet

advantage in mass that now, after Vietnam, became even greater? How could the nuclear leverage be used so as to increase America's ability to fully deter the Kremlin? Such ambitious geopolitical and military aims necessitated much more than a Weinberger Doctrine for the use of force and a transfer from compulsory military service to the All-Volunteer Force. These were immediate responses to the repercussions of the Vietnam War on an internal level. Time was probably ripe now for a proactive move that would radically transform the balance of power to the advantage of Washington.

Conclusion

The Soviet own atomic bomb inaugurated an era of nuclear deterrence where each side could develop nuclear weapons, but never use them against the other. This made the very essence of war obsolete and led to the first crisis in American strategic thought. War, with its nuclear dimension, made the idea of absolute warfare, where each enemy could be totally annihilated, practically feasible. As a result, war nullified itself. Washington had then to substitute limited war for total war. Such wars would be fought with limited capabilities and for limited objectives. Nevertheless, that proved problematic as well. The US military experience in Vietnam ended in a fiasco. The conditions within which the intervention took place, the overall context and the manner in which it was carried out did all highlight substantial flaws in the way Washington made use of force. It exposed the defects inherent in a strategy that does not project itself beyond the immediate aim of war, which is military victory.

The crisis was an opportunity for US strategists to reconsider the proper utility and the adequate use of military power to reach political objectives in accordance with the nation's

principles and interests. The Weinberger/Powell Doctrine reformulated both the conditions and the manner force would be used in pursuit of clearly defined objectives. It was – in appearance – a new conception of the political dimension of force and – in reality – a return to the all-or-nothing paradigm for the use of force. It did reflect the military's decision to acknowledge the limits that a republican culture placed on the use of force and an attempt to realign within them. The end of compulsory military service in favour of the All-Volunteer-Force was the first of a set of military transformations that would occur as a result of the Vietnam War. It did echo the new mindset with regard to the proper value of the military within the American society. It was the preliminary step for the way to a new American way of making war.

CHAPTER THREE

A New American Way of War

> Using force makes sense as a policy where the stakes warrant, where and when force can be effective, where no other policies are likely to prove effective, where its application can be limited in scope and time, and where the potential benefits justify the potential costs and sacrifice.
>
> Pr. George H.W. Bush, 5 January 1993

Introduction

In the aftermath of Vietnam, a new set of rules came to redefine the when, the why and the how the country goes to war. The Weinberger/Powell Doctrine became the guarantee for a kind of war that in essence is in utter opposition to Vietnam. Although it seemed to be based on a new perception of the utility of military force, it was in reality a wise attempt at realigning within the republican fetters to the use of force while at the same time returning to the all-or-nothing approach to warfare. Accordingly, a process of military transformation was heralded by the All-Volunteer-Force that put an end to the draft. The ensuing innovations would lead to major geostrategic changes and would result in the creation of a new American way of war.

This chapter closely examines the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), its causes, components, origin, development, nature and implication and some of its military as well as political consequences. It then exposes the effect that RMA had on the evolution of the Cold War, on the significance of the nuclear arsenal and the major changes it brought into the way America goes to war. The chapter does then depict the birth of a new world order in the aftermath of the

Cold War, the nature of this world, its specificities, the status and the role of the United States within it and the dimension that military force would occupy in it. It ends with an analysis of the US reaction to the first crisis that would challenge both the stability of the new world order and Washington's position within it. The significance of the crisis and of America's reaction to it in the short as well as in the long run are closely and meticulously investigated in the light of the utility of the American way of war.

1.1 The Revolution in Military Affairs: Immaculate Destruction

For deterrence to be fully effective, the USA had to outspend the USSR on strategic nuclear weapons, not for the purpose of using these weapons in a war against the Soviet Union, but for the purpose of making use of their political and psychological value. President John F. Kennedy (1961-1963) had been able to deter the Soviets during the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) because of America's nuclear strategic superiority and local conventional superiority (in the Caribbean) over the Soviets. The situation was different in the 1980's: The USSR was then producing and increasingly deploying mobile SS-22 intermediate-range rockets at the rate of one new system every six days and was expanding its influence in many developing countries (Magstadt 155). The army came up with a variety of suggestions, including the use of the neutron bomb, a nuclear weapon that would kill people while leaving structures including buildings intact (Kurth 73). Another suggestion was the development of two new US-based strategic[14] delivery systems – the MX missile with ten warheads each and the B-1 (stealth) bomber – and two theatre missile systems – the Pershing II and ground launched cruise missile (GLCM) – to be deployed in West Germany (Magstadt 156).

[14]A strategic weapon is one designed for mass destruction like a nuclear missile. A tactical weapon, however, typically carries a conventional high explosive warhead.

Moreover, the army's strategic thinkers were developing something more original and ingenious, and much more aligned with the classical American way of war. They sought to rely on recent developments in non-nuclear technologies. This meant significantly improved capabilities in battlefield control, command, communication and information (C^3I) and precision guided munitions (PGMs) so that US pronounced advantage in mobility and technology could creatively be used to trump the Soviet advantage in mass (Kurth 65, 73). These new technologies were together termed ET (emerging technologies) and were believed to have together brought a revolution in military affairs (RMA). In the 1980's, the US army built upon these amazing new technologies and concepts and produced a brand new battlefield strategy, the Air-Land Battle Doctrine, which coherently integrated C^3I, air power and land power. The army made a convincing case that this new strategy enabled it to fight and win a conventional (non-nuclear) war against the Soviet Union (Kurth 74). The Soviet bloc had, for decades, maintained a clear edge in this respect because of the central geopolitical position they held and because of the sheer numbers of troops and tanks they could deploy. With the introduction of RMA, the US conventional forces now clearly held the advantage (Quester 123-4).

The concept 'electronic battlefield' originated in the Pentagon much earlier, during the Vietnam War, as an urgent response to the sheer failure of conventional counter-guerrilla tactics. The guerrilla's asymmetric methods did in fact nullify the very political utility of conventional warfare. General Westmoreland compared American performance in 1969 to that of a "giant without eyes" (qtd. in Buley 92). As the enemy was easily hiding in the dense jungles, there was an increasingly pressing demand for mechanical sensors necessary for the surveillance and detection of guerrilla forces. The automation of military processes was then already under way in an attempt to achieve complete computerized control of the battlefield. By the end of the Vietnam

War, General Westmoreland was among those who believed that the novel technological advances could have possibly revolutionary magnitudes. In October 1969, he delineated his own vision of the "Battlefield of the Future":

> Enemy forces will be located, tracked and targeted almost instantaneously through the use of data links, computer assisted evaluation, and automated fire control. With the first round kill probabilities approaching certainty, and with surveillance devices, that can continually track the enemy, the need for large forces to fix the opposition physically will be less important. …I see battlefields on which we can destroy anything we locate through instant communications and the almost instantaneous application of highly lethal firepower. In summary, I see an army built around an integrated area control system that exploits the advanced technology of communications, sensors, fire direction, and the required automatic data processing. (qtd. in Buley 92)

A perfect summary of what would be termed the Revolution in Military Affairs. The electronic battlefield concept originating as a technological solution to guerrilla infiltration would soon have unprecedented consequences in conventional warfare.

Many of the technologies that would make up this revolution in warfare were already emerging in the 1960's. By 1961, satellites were already used for reconnaissance purposes and then in 1965 for communication; the very first tactical computers were in use in 1966 and the internet started as a Pentagon-backed project to link together computers in the 1960's. During the 1970's, an attempt had been made to promote near-zero CEP (circular error probable) cruise missiles to allow for discriminate long-range strikes with non-nuclear warheads (Buley 92-3). The

aim was, to use the exact words of Albert Wohlstetter, "to keep destruction under control" (qtd. in Buley 93).

The military transformations under way in the 1980's stemmed also from the need for greater, more effective coordination based on integration and synchronization of the different military services. The use of remote sensors, computers and enhanced communication systems held the promise of diminishing – almost to the point of eradicating – the intrinsic confusion of the fog of war (Quester 123). It seemingly became possible to make future calculations that would make of fighting conventional wars a set of predictable and neatly traced military steps. The friction between plan and reality in Clausewitzean notion of war would be reduced to the maximum. War would then, once again, approach its absolute realization.

'Hyper war' or 'cyber war' – the terms used to label the Revolution in Military Affairs – denoted the significant dimension of information-technology-led transformation within it. Nevertheless, it was not all about the impact of the new precision of weaponry itself on American warfare, though that too was astounding, but it had more to do with the comprehensive transformation of C^3I. That is so for technology, or the advance of intelligent weapons alone cannot make a revolution. What genuinely makes a revolution is the way the various military organizations adjust and shape novel technology, operational concepts and military systems, the way in which a military information infrastructure allows for the instantaneous collection, collation and distribution of masses of real-time information (Shaw 32). In this respect, Andrew Krepinevich gives a concise definition of RMA:

> The application of new technologies into a significant number of military systems combines with innovative operational concepts and organizational adaptation in a way that fundamentally alters the character and conduct of a conflict. It does so by

> producing a dramatic increase –often an order of magnitude or greater –in the combat potential and military effectiveness of armed forces. (qtd. in Rodriguez 17)

Supportive change in four specific areas makes up RMA and these are technology, systems development, operational innovation and organizational adaptation. The new operational sophistication, married to the technological dimension of the revolution in modern warfare offered the prospect of a new American way of war—an amazingly more efficient style of warfare that promised to seemingly destroy the enemy from great distance with infinite precision while at the same time minimizing US casualties (Buley 94).

RMA held the stunning promise of completely transforming conventional warfare because of the possibility it offers of real time knowledge of the battlefield in precisely targeted attacks coordinating missiles, aircraft and ground forces. Clausewitz had argued that it is impossible to perfectly control warfare because of its two inherent characteristics namely the fog of war and friction. The fog of war emanates from the confusing nature of the battle, which prevents any commander from acquiring complete military information, while friction is the unpredictable nature of war stemming from a variety of factors including weather, technical complications as well as the interactive and competitive very nature of strategy. The digitisation of the battlefield promised to reverse this assumption allowing for total control of warfare as technical ingenuity could transcend both the fog of war and friction. In 1978 the then Under Secretary of Defence William Perry asserted that the US Department of Defence would soon be able to “see everything of interest on the battlefield, hit everything that could be seen and kill everything that could be hit” (qtd. in Buley 86). A revolutionary vision was born, based on thorough situational awareness to overcome the fog of war and complete precision to outdo friction. Information dominance and predictability became thus the two major underpinnings of RMA.

Information dominance allows for seeing everything of interest on the battlefield and perfect precision in the munitions' guidance allows for hitting everything that can be seen. Both render warfare amazingly predictable and give the US military an unprecedented edge. William Cohen has expressed the fact that:

> We've had the age-old expression that knowledge is power, and absolute knowledge is absolute power. …So the actual domination of the information world will put us in a position to maintain superiority over any other force for the foreseeable future. …I'm not aware of any other country that has this…kind of technology that will give us this edge. (qtd. in Derian 114)

This shift in the nation's conception of war was an intrinsic part of the overall attempt to revolutionise basic assumptions of US grand strategy. RMA was a conscious effort to purge the post-Vietnam military mind-set of its rigid reliance on overwhelming force, its risk-aversion and the crisis of the political utility of force. Both Clausewitzean notions of the fog of war and friction were now a thing of the past since the Revolution in Military Affairs has now rendered warfare an essentially technical process turning around the basic possibility of a thorough technical mastery of the battlefield. It now allowed for immaculate destruction. This idea of total control of warfare was based on the assumption of absolute control of information allowing for US forces to see, hear and understand everything that is relevant to the battle, while simultaneously denying such knowledge to the adversary. Dominating information held thus the prospect of making warfare predictable to the extent that resources were managed with efficiency. The accuracy of weapons systems, namely precision-guided munitions was the guarantee of success. Predictive warfare achieved through absolute technical mastery of the battlefield had an important implication; the American military would no longer rely on its traditional inductive method of learning from past

experience and history, but would rather make use of a deductive approach (Buley 87). Predicting the future through absolute knowledge would allow the US military to wage and win the nation's wars with a genuinely new approach that no longer needs a return to its past experiences, but confidence in the knowledge of what the future was going to look like.

RMA, consequently, also held the prospect of the irrationality of nuclear weapons. What would they be necessary for now that the USA had a clear military advantage in conventional warfare? Robert McNamara, former secretary of Defence, together with many other American analysts, contented that it was high time to renounce nuclear escalation threats because the hazards inherent in an all-out escalation to a thermonuclear war had always appeared to outweigh, by far, any benefits. Now that US conventional forces had become so dominant thanks to the Revolution in Military Affairs, those risks became altogether unnecessary (Quester 124). Yet the very origin of the technology of precision guidance was a desire to manage to subject the seemingly irrational and uncontrollable course of a potential nuclear war to rationality because it requires a high degree of precision to hit specific enemy targets without destroying cities.

> Precision guided munitions were born from the womb of nuclear culture. The search for nuclear-tipped missiles created the technology of precision that precision munitions drew on. The surveillance system created to guard against nuclear war was the foundation of their targeting systems (Friedman 72).

Aversion to Mutual Assured Destruction with its inherently uncontrollable and irrational nature led to great interest in creating an idealised version of a perfectly controllable warfare that was the main underpinning of RMA. The radical implications of RMA on strategy and politics were momentous: "While such precisely delivered non-nuclear weapons are not likely to supplant nuclear weapons completely as a means of responding to nuclear attack, they have a large political

importance…in reducing the pressures to resort to nuclear weapons. They would greatly increase the possibility of keeping a conflict under control" (Wohlstetter 382).

Washington did then retain the option of nuclear escalation. Even if the USA could now prevail in any conventional war against the Soviet Union, it had to also rely on nuclear supremacy, not only to deter, but also to pre-empt if necessary. Shortly after the Vietnam War, a new kind of defence intellectuals, the Neoconservatives, emerged. Some were Communists, or, at least, Trotskyites converted into anti-Communists and many were Jewish people concerned about the persecution of Jews within the Soviet Union and about Soviet support of Arab states, which were enemies of Israel. As a result and contrary to traditional conservatives and realists, like Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, who perceived the USSR mainly as a normal superpower pursuing its own interests and hence promoted a realistic moderate and cautious *détente* policy; these neoconservatives perceived the Soviet Union as an aggressive, reckless great power driven mainly by ideological compulsions. This led them to promote an American nuclear supremacy that would allow the USA if necessary to destroy the Soviet forces in a pre-emptive attack (first strike). Their aim was to forget and overcome the Vietnam Syndrome rather than attempt to reinterpret the Vietnam War (Kurth 75-6).

When the Republican Reagan Administration came to power in 1981, it was determined to overcome the Vietnam syndrome and bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union without military confrontation. That would be achieved by producing a military crisis within the Communist rival. The administration's strategic program was an inclusive and articulate integration of the major strategies of each of the military services. It also comprised the views of the neoconservatives now holding some third-tier national-security positions within the administration, of the traditional Republican anti-Communists, and of the formidable interests of the aerospace industry (Kurth 76).

Five elements composed the program. The first encompassed a large increase in the US defence budget to allow for the build-up of the desired weapons system and the construction of a genuine image of its engagement in a serious military competition with the USSR. The second involved a build-up of nuclear forces capable of pre-emptive or first strike Air-Force program attack against the Soviet Union. The third was the Air-Land Battle Doctrine of the army. The fourth comprised the Maritime Strategy of the Navy including a build-up of naval forces capable of fighting and defeating not only the Soviet Navy but also other Soviet forces in any conventional war (Kurth 77). The fifth was the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) – popularly labelled 'Star Wars', a novel vision for a high-technology anti-ballistic missile system, parts of which would be assigned to each of the three military services but with the key role being allotted to the Air Force. SDI was meant to defend the USA and its citizens from any nuclear assault. The program called for the development of a missile defence system capable of effectively intercepting and destroying incoming enemy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM's) (Magstadt 156).

As the Reagan administration was visibly investing heavily in the electronics and other technologies of the SDI, The Soviet Union greatly apprehended what might be available to the USA and its NATO allies. RMA, according to the Soviet leaders' own perception of it, would certainly give the US and its allies a clearly pronounced military advantage over the USSR in case of a conventional war in Europe (Quester 123). The Reagan administration made sure that its rhetoric matched if not exceeded its deeds. Former General, Alexander Haig, Pr. Reagan's Secretary of State, publicly and portentously spoke about America's nuclear "fighting capabilities" and how they would allow it to utterly "prevail" in a war (Magstadt 156). Notwithstanding the defensive nature of SDI, the concept would completely change the game rules. MAD theory or the premise of mutual deterrence was based on the idea that each side needed to have an equal

capability of destroying the other. This equal capability makes deterrence possible. If, however, one side lacks the means to attack the other, or possesses the means to defend itself and the other does not, the resulting asymmetric relationship is definitely destabilizing. In other words, the USA could now, according to the Soviet Union, play the nuclear card to its own exclusive advantage. (Magstadt 157)

As a result, the chiefs of the KGB[15], Yuri Andropov, and the Soviet General Staff Marshal Nikolai V. Ogarkov took very seriously the US advantage in these seemingly immense economy and high technology. They believed so much in the American RMA that they initiated a series of reform decisions which, inadvertently but ultimately, would lead, among other factors, to the collapse of the Soviet Union itself. While attempting to match the US military in RMA –by reforming and restructuring the Soviet economy (*perestroika*) and reforming and opening up the Soviet bureaucracy (*glasnost*) – the Soviet leaders could not realize that their old system could possibly not absorb such reforms (Kurth 78-9).

The appointment of Michael Gorbachev as Soviet leader in 1985 initiated a new superpower détente and the reform process underway soon fuelled democratic movements in Central Europe, leading to the dramatic velvet revolutions that overthrew the Communist states in the region. The Soviet empire in Western Europe ended up in a breath-taking speed cracking, crumbling, disintegrating and ultimately collapsing in 1989. The Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989; Germany was reunited as a capitalist democratic country. By the end of 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist. The fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism can largely be interpreted as an outgrowth of particular internal historical circumstances within the USSR, as an

[15] The KGB was the main security agency of the Soviet Union between 1954 and 1991. It was attached to the Council of Ministers.

exoneration of Kennan's long-term strategy of containment and also as a success of Pr. Reagan's foreign policy (Magstadt 154).

1.2 President George W.H. Bush's "New World Order"

The end of the Cold War heralded a new international theatre no longer abiding by the bipolar rules of the game. In this largely unpredictable post-Cold War world, the USA would no longer be able to rely on the balance of terror that used to confine both the USA and the Soviet Union, together with their respective clients and allies, to specific patterns of conduct within clearly drawn borders (Cyr 63). The end of the Cold War did thus deeply revolutionise the context within which American foreign policy and its security agenda had to be devised. Containment became obsolete and presidents could no longer rely on congressional support for overseas military interventions. The 'evil' empire collapsed and the Communist threat could no longer be used to justify the use of US military prowess. A potentially dangerous emerging multipolarity was gradually supplanting the stable, predictable bipolarity of the Cold War (Marsh and Dobson 56).

The nascent multipolarity would seemingly be the result of a decline of military primacy and a rise of economic supremacy as important factors in shaping the international order. Japan and Germany, for example, would probably now, after the demise of the Soviet empire and the end of their security dependence on Washington, threaten the very hegemony of the USA. These states might possibly become significant and powerful contenders to US post-Cold War preponderance given their economic development, clearly visible in the giant leap in their industrial productivity, their financial surpluses and trade balances (Hendrickson 3-12).

In the meanwhile, many sceptics were predicting the fall of the USA as a world power because of what Paul Kennedy called "imperial overstretch", a risk quite familiar to historians of

the rise and then subsequent fall of previous great powers. The collapse of the USA would seemingly emanate from its high military expenditures, especially during the Reagan years, producing rising federal deficits and national debts. Paul Kennedy predicted that in a world where economic primacy would certainly surpass military pre-eminence in defining state relationships, the USA was facing the prospect of collapse (665-92).

The peaceful closure of the Cold War might allegedly not give rise to an unprecedented, uncontested hegemonic victor reigning supreme over a unipolar world, shaping it the way it deemed fit, but rather to a multipolar, unpredictable and probably more dangerous international world order. In 1989, the future of US hegemony, its role in the world, the way its foreign policy and its security agenda were to be formulated, the utility of the military build-up developed in the last decade were all vague.

A considerable portion of the American public were expecting their government, in the aftermath of the Cold War, to reduce its overseas military commitments and to focus on domestic policy so as to redress the internal economic and social issues, to spend more on education and health and to raise the standard of living of the American citizen. They were pressing for a due peace dividend —the reallocation of spending from military to domestic purposes (Hanson 2). Now that freedom was spreading everywhere in Europe, that the Soviet threat disappeared and that both the Truman and the Reagan doctrines became obsolete, that the Cold War emergency was over, the American people were demanding a return to normalcy.

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe coincided with the tenure of George Herbert Walker Bush (1989-1993). The new Republican president came to office before the Cold War ended with impressive credentials of an expert in diplomacy and national security and surrounded by a group of Cold-War professionals. Slowly, however, the Bush administration realized that

confrontation with the Soviet Union had ended; their Cold War foreign policy agenda suddenly became irrelevant. Deterrence, military interventions against right-wing revolutions in the developing countries, the balance of terror and the strategy of containment – the cornerstone of US foreign policy for over four decades – had now to be totally changed (Magstadt 164).

Vision, rather than expertise, was needed to design a new grand strategy for the USA in the aftermath of the Cold War, but the new president was being criticised for lacking what he called "the vision thing". Despite – or because of – his Cold War expertise, it was really hard for President George H.W. Bush to devise a new big idea that would guide America's grand strategy in the midst of that unprecedented change (Bush and Scowcroft 16-7). Deeply imbued with the Cold War habits, President Bush was a sober pragmatic who would manage foreign policy with a firm hand. He would adopt a reactive pragmatic approach, dealing with problems one by one, as they arose (Magstadt 165).

President Bush announced that the USA and its allies "won" the Cold War, that the American people should be "proud" of such a victory and that the fall of the Soviet Empire portended a "unique opportunity" for the Americans "to see the principles for which America has stood for two centuries, democracy, free enterprise and the rule of law, spread more widely than ever before in human history." (Bush, Remarks at Texas A and M University) "[A] new world order is struggling to be born," he also declared, "a world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle." (Bush, Address before a Joint Session of Congress) In this "new world," "America stands at the centre of a widening circle of freedom...and there is a need for leadership that only America can provide" (Bush, State of the Union Address). President Bush made it clear that the end of the Cold War is a victory to the USA and its friends. He believed that the fall of the Soviet Union and the demise of communism gave birth to a "New World Order" based upon the American

principles of democracy and free enterprise and that it became incumbent upon the USA to lead the world. Leadership, of course, required military might to maintain peace and stability in a world increasingly interconnected and unpredictable.

The New World Order that President George H.W. Bush, many high officials in his administration and even numerous eloquent observers of international affairs anticipated would be similar to the one visualized by Franklin D. Roosevelt near the end of WWII. It would be a world where the USA would enjoy unquestioned economic and military superiority and would work in cooperation with allied countries under the auspices of the United Nations to bring peace and stability to the world (Schulzinger 327). It was allegedly a return to the belief in the principle of collective security; under the banner of the United Nations, each state in the global system would embrace the idea that the security of one is the concern of all.

The administration believed that the United States of America has just achieved one of the greatest strategic successes in world history. The very success of Containment, however, made it now obsolete for the USA and, as a result, a new era in world history started. International relation specialists considered the year 1989 the year zero: the end of an ancient era and the beginning of a new one. The ancient era was described as a heroic struggle on behalf of liberty that ended in an amazing victory (Bacevich, *American Empire* 35); the new era would be inaugurated by a new world order enunciated by President Bush and his team. It was not yet clear, though, how this vision of a new world order would, in practice, be realized.

One thing was certain, however, according to the White House new military strategy disclosed before Congress in March 1990:

> In a new era we foresee our military power will remain an essential underpinning of the global balance...We see that the more likely demands for the use of our military forces may not involve the Soviet Union, and may be in the Third World, where new capabilities and approaches may be required...to reinforce our units forward deployed or to project power into areas where we have no permanent presence [namely the Middle East because of] our reliance on energy supplies from this region...Lower order threats like terrorism, subversion, insurgency and drug trafficking are menacing the Unites States, its citizens, and its interest in new ways...Low intensity conflict involves the struggle of competing principles and ideologies below the level of conventional war. (The White House 15)

The "low intensity conflicts" that President Bush mentioned came in the form of guerrilla war techniques that had enjoyed much success in Southeast Asia and that were likewise used in Africa and Latin America. The "new capabilities and approaches" refer, among other things, to the counterinsurgency techniques needed to oppose such a kind of unconventional warfare. The use of similar methods by the American military forces would not be an innovation in the American way of war, though. Guerrilla strategies had already been employed by the American revolutionaries during the American war of independence, where a strategy of attrition had been employed to win over a much superior enemy. They had also been applied earlier, during the colonial era, against America's native inhabitants in a series of ruthless, long-lasting frontier wars meant to subjugate the indigenous population and take absolute control of its territories. It simply refers to the tradition of small wars, which is an integral part of American war making culture.

What makes guerrilla warfare different from conventional warfare is that the essence of guerrilla warfare is in letting the enemy pass then ambush him afterwards rather than declaring:

"they shall not pass."[16] No uniforms are worn and no lines are held. As Vietnam had shown, the advantage of such a technique lies in denying the conventional enemy information on targets, but, inherent in this way of war is also the inability to protect one's own land against conquest. (Quester 110) The war in Indochina also demonstrated that success in guerrilla war largely depends on popular support. If the US is to defeat a guerrilla uprising, it needs first to have a sound counterinsurgency strategy based on the endeavour of preventing the people from going to the guerrilla's side. US failure in Vietnam, Americans have seemingly learned, stemmed largely from their inability to win the Vietnamese hearts and minds.

Massive popular involvement in warfare has prevailed ever since Napoleon's *leveé en masse*, his mobilisation of large portions of the French total population through his harnessing of people's passion in large battles and contests of endurance. Entire nations came to be totally mobilised for war as WWI and WWII demonstrated. There are though many other dimensions of popular involvement in warfare including people's willingness to pay the costs of a war, for example, whether human or material. War, by essence, disrupts the very life of an entire nation. This the reason why it is important to harness people behind a cause and get them support the war effort[17]. If this is crucial in conventional war, it is even more momentous in guerrilla warfare as fighting literally takes place in the midst of people's life.

Mao Zedong, the Communist Chinese leader, brought two major innovations to the advocacy and analysis of guerrilla warfare. One is the idea already discussed earlier of the asserted correlation between popular support and the success of guerrillas: "the guerrilla is to the people as

[16] "They shall not pass" is a slogan used to express determination to defend a position against an enemy. It was most famously used during the Battle of Verdun in WWI by French General Robert Nivelle.
[17] a war effort is a coordinated mobilization of society's resources—both industrial and human—towards the support of a military force.

a fish is to water."[18] (qtd. in Quester 111) The second is the idea that an initial success in a guerrilla war is not a sign of victory but of ultimate defeat. Driving an enemy from the field and claiming a great victory is, according to Mao, falling into a trap: once fleeing the battlefield, in what seems like a defeat, and once dispersed, the guerrillas would arrange new ambushes, and, in so doing, drive the enemy deeper into the mess and closer to his exhaustion and ultimate defeat. Much more than any type of conventional warfare, guerrilla wars are contests of endurance. He who can stand the pain longer, he who is more stubborn prevails (Quester 111-2).

One major lesson learned from Vietnam was America's inability to pass the test of endurance. While both the effectiveness and the morale of the troops, unable to fully comprehend and deal with the logic of guerrilla warfare, was falling, public discontent was growing, and the military distrust towards civilians ability to deserve the primacy they enjoy over uniformed officers rising to unprecedented heights. Now that these low intensity conflicts became America's new concern, it was high time the Bush administration gave them their due place and utility in US security agenda.

Since Vietnam, the US military showed a noticeable aversion to counter-insurgency operations because, precisely, of a lack of comparative advantage in low-intensity conflicts, as they were exclusively trained and prepared for high-intensity operations. For a while, the forces took much comfort in the apparent lack of distant civil wars that might necessitate American intervention. The apparently unbeatable military power of the US found itself undone by its inability to manage and fully comprehend conflicts against enemies that emerge out of the shadows

[18] For a detailed discussion of Mao Zedong theories and their role on guerrilla warfare, see Mark Elliot-Bateman, Defeat in the East: The Mark of Mao Tse-Tung on War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

of civil society, opting for minor encounters rather than key battles, aiming at unnerving, demoralising, harassing, humiliating, and eventually exhausting their adversary (Freedman 6).

It turns out that the most bewildering issues of security policy emanate from irregular rather than regular wars. The major concern is the difficulty to decide whether it is necessary to mobilise the nation even on a modest scale, and to deploy military forces or not. That is so for the nature of the threat posed is not clearly defined and the direct military action is not sure to make things better, but might, on the contrary, make them even worse. Irregular warfare makes it hard for policy makers to describe and quantify the risks and calculate the costs and benefits inherent in any military action, to weigh the concrete human and physical damage against the intangibles of reputation and principle. An even harder challenge to strategists is the potential of surprises inherent in the politically complex setting where the military action, if chosen, would take place (Freedman 7).

Reorienting the security concern of the USA to low-intensity conflicts meant that American strategists would have to face the colossal consequential challenge of shifting their focus from preparing for regular wars to irregular wars. In the former, the separation between combat and civil society is clear; in the latter, asymmetric strategies are used, combat becomes an integral part of the civil society in which the conflict takes place causing it to be unpredictable, long lasting and highly costly. The National Security Strategy of the United States, unveiled on 1 August 1991, announced:

> As we seek to build a new world order in the aftermath of the cold War, we will likely discover that the enemy we face is less an expansionist communism than it is instability itself. And in the face of multiple and varied threats to stability, we will

> increasingly find our military strength a source of reassurance and a foundation for security, regionally and globally. (The White House 25)

Washington was, consequently, shouldered with the responsibility of building "a new" world order. No return to normalcy would occur for "instability" was the new enemy, and, accordingly, the war technologies developed during the Reagan era would still be of great use. War would be, whenever necessary, an instrument to protect and promote world stability. As far as the USA was concerned, military might would not be downgraded as a determiner of world status as the whole world now needed American support to sustain peace and stability. The new US security agenda, based on the vision of a dangerous new world, confirmed the reorientation of the security focus to regional contingencies in the developing world, where US presence would be paramount to deter any potential conflict that might destabilise the international order and, *ipso facto*, put in jeopardy America's own interests.

Reflecting a military culture that after the Vietnam debacle became radically far more casualty-averse than the average American citizen, increasing sensitivity to casualties was incorporated in both military training doctrines and grand strategy. The shift to the all-volunteer force came to even more accentuate this aversion. Armies composed of highly trained professionals throughout history have always been much more casualty-conscious when fighting for vague causes than battling armies composed of citizen-soldiers and fighting for existential goals as in the case of the two world wars. Consequently, the standards of performance for the maximum number of tolerable friendly fatalities for specific missions was set at particular levels that would have been, by historical standards, viewed as extremely and even unrealistically low. The Bush Administration's Regional Defence Strategy of 1996, for example, states:

> In regional conflicts, America's stake may seem less apparent to the people. We should provide forces with capabilities that minimise the need to trade American lives with tyrants and aggressors. …Thus, our response to regional crises must be decisive, requiring the high quality personnel and technological edge to win quickly and win with minimum casualties (qtd. in Buley 73)

Simply put, the US military did want to ensure that they would never have to fight another war like Vietnam again. Following a well-established military tradition of failing to learn and then institutionalize lessons taught by involvement in guerrilla campaigns and unconventional wars, Vietnam was seemingly no exception. On the contrary, it took the form of a collective amnesia. The memories of Vietnam were pushed out of the consciousness of the military institution and then over time "passed implicitly into the military culture, into its doctrine, training and education, and thought process. The collective conclusion can be reduced to the simplistic cry of 'No More Vietnams'...[because] Vietnam was a scenario that did not match our national style" (Hoffman xi).

The national style of warfare was nothing less than an "American way of war built around a strategy that employs the vast economic and technological base to grind down opponents with firearm and mass." (xii) A way of war based on the concept of overwhelming force was the only guarantee of success. Vietnam was viewed by the military as an aberration. General William DePuy, who was among the major architects of Search-and-Destroy tactics in Southeast Asia, and who became head of the Army's Training and Doctrine command immediately after US withdrawal from Indochina, made a seemingly strong argument. He declared that the army should keep on capitalizing on its significant assets, rather than attempt to remedy its assumed deficiencies in those operations that tended to blur the boundaries between the political and the military dimensions of war. "Regular US Army troop units," General DePuy believed, "are peculiarly ill-

suited for the purpose of securing operations where they must be in close contact with the people, [but are] perfectly suited for search-and destroy" (qtd. in Buley 74). After the Vietnam War, tutoring on foreign internal defence (FID)[19] at the service schools of the Army practically disappeared. A survey conducted in 1989 examined the 1,400 articles published by Military Review between 1975 and 1989 discovered 43 articles only devoted to low-intensity conflicts (Buley 74).

Similarly, the Air Force did teach nothing in its professional schools about Vietnam nor did it mention it in the schools' doctrinal manuals. Undoubtedly, guerrilla warfare was an unrecognised incongruity and the only guarantee of military victory continued to be a quick conventional war relying upon a bombing doctrine that remained perfectly appropriate for any kind of conflict. The only view that kept resonating in US military discourse was the case for the rationalization of overwhelming force applied without political restrictions as a key to victory. No sophisticated concern was ever given to the political and cultural dimensions of Vietnam; no genuine searching critique of the real causes of the military's failure was ever undertaken (75).

The Cold War ended with the fall of the Soviet Union without the least need on the part of Washington to use any of the innovative strategies of the Reagan administration in an actual war. Those military strategies, specifically designed against the Soviet military threat, including pre-emptive first strike, the Maritime Strategy and SDI, immediately and automatically became obsolete after the dissolution of the Soviet Empire. This led to a strategic void for the Air Force and the Navy, who both had now to look for a new strategic purpose. Things were different for the US Army, however; The Air-Land Battle Doctrine could now be directed against any potential

[19] Foreign internal defence (FID) is another term for counter-insurgency.

enemy. These might be North Korea or Iraq or Iran. The army claimed it had a two-war capability: the ability of fighting, if need be, two armies simultaneously, an Iraqi and a North Korean. The underlining idea of the doctrine is the army's ability to fight two separate wars in two different regions (Kurth 78-9).

Everything was thus ready for the USA to fulfil this grandiose role of the world's policeman. The demise of the Soviet Union had successfully removed fetters on America's freedom of action, and the gigantic military might would be the tool to enforce peace and stability by the force of arms. The fact, however, that the Cold War ended without any military confrontation between the USA and the USSR, or any other potential enemy, meant that the renaissance in conventional strategy, all those technological innovations and their assumed operational possibilities of improvements in smart weapons, sensors and systems integration were untested hypotheses. The effectiveness of these new technologies together with the lessons the US military officers distilled from the Vietnam War yet needed to be proved.

1.3 The First Iraq War: A New American Way of War

Saddam Hussein had been ruling Iraq since 1979 and, in his war against Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran from 1980 to 1988, was supported by the Reagan administration. The support consisted of the restitution of full diplomatic relations (broken during the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict), $4 billion in agricultural credits, US military intelligence and advisers, and US support for sale of arms by its allies to Iraq, dual use technology, together with material for manufacture of chemical and biological weapons (Offner 30) including anthrax (Magstadt 171).

The Bush administration kept close relations with Iraq as the Iran-Iraq War subsided, even while the Iraqi president was crushing the Kurds in 1988. Yet, when Iraq invaded and annexed the

oil-rich neighbouring Kuwait on August 9, 1990, threatening to control the Middle Eastern oil fields, the adventure was deemed intolerable and greatly humiliating to a Bush administration that had failed to foresee or pre-empt the invasion. The post-Cold war context enabled the USA to play the role of the upholder of international law and mobilize the support of the United Nations. It also militarily and politically enabled the ensuing war to take place (Shaw 14).

President George Bush denounced Iraqi's "naked aggression" and declared that "this will not stand." (Bush, Remarks by Pr. Bush August 5, 1990) The USA has all along the Cold War been concerned about three major factors in the Middle East: oil, the security of Israel, and keeping the Soviets out of the region. Now the Presidential rhetoric took an ideological tone, likening Saddam Hussein to Hitler and invoking the Munich[20] analogy. In his memoirs, President Bush disclosed his own perception of and insight into the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait: "I knew what had happened in the 1930's when a weak and leaderless League of Nations had failed to stand up to the Japanese, Italian and German aggression" (Bush and Scowcroft 303).

The President obtained UN resolutions to impose severe economic sanctions on Iraq in an attempt to force its withdrawal from Kuwait. At the same time, he declared Saudi Arabia, containing 20 percent of the world's oil reserves, to be a vital US interest, and immediately sent 200,000 troops there under the mission name of Operation Desert Shield to defend the country from a potential Iraqi assault (Offner 31). The US-led international coalition to support Desert Shield was composed of 37 nations with half a million troops, including America's own force. Each member in the coalition had a different motive as for its military engagement to protect Saudi Arabia. Secretary of State James Baker confessed that the coalition had nothing to do with

[20] The Munich Agreement (September 30, 1938) was a settlement reached by Germany, France, Italy and Great Britain. It permitted German annexation of the Sudetenland in Western Czechoslovakia. It aimed at the appeasement of Adolf Hitler in attempt to avoid war.

multilateralism: “It was a US operation that received financial support from states as powerful as Japan and Germany to those as small as Malaysia” (qtd. in Yetiv 23).

The subsequent enfolding of events made it evident to President Bush, Defence Secretary Dick Cheney and Chairman Colin Powell that the Gulf crisis could in no way be solved diplomatically. US Congress approved President Bush’s request and authorized him to employ military force against Iraq under the auspices of the United Nations. A magnificent air, land and sea US-led coalition was stationed in Saudi Arabia. To provide what Defence Secretary Dick Cheney described as an offensive capacity, President Bush doubled the size of the US expeditionary troops to over 500,000 meant to evict Iraq out of Kuwait (Schulzinger 364).

Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was the first challenge – or probably opportunity – that came to test the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine, the efficiency of RMA and the ground on which President Bush’s claimed New World Order stood. It came at a time when the USA was inaugurating a unipolar world as a great strategic victor. Yet, despite the immeasurable scope of US hegemony after the fall of the Berlin Wall, its military was still haunted by the Vietnam Syndrome, a syndrome it had been trying ever since the war in Indochina to overcome and forget.

Whether the new military technologies would be of any positive use in kicking the Vietnam syndrome was still uncertain. For many sceptics, the USA has, since Vietnam, lost its skilful grip on the art of warfare. Sceptics were warning against the effect of desert sun and sand on the new untested equipment, against how the conceptually brilliant systems’ own exceedingly complex designs, inept maintenance or incompetent operators could bring them down low. Many predicted a high level of casualties in potential blue-on-blue assaults and malfunctioning indicators leading coalition units to cause as much damage to each other as to the enemy (Freedman 13).

Despite the many sceptical arguments that preceded the American intervention in the Persian Gulf, when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the US army was seemingly ready to face the challenge. It had the Weinberger/Powell and the Air-Land Battle Doctrines: the first provided the Bush team with a set of clearly stated guidelines on how America should go to war, while the second defined the way the army should fight the war. No repetition of the errors that had led to the Vietnam debacle would occur. No micromanagement or half- measures would be allowed.

While conducting the war, thus, both senior civilians and senior military officers had the Weinberger admonitions in mind. The conduct of the Gulf War would have to perfectly conform to the Doctrine. Thus, first, the administration defined the war in terms of clear US national interest namely securing access to Gulf oil and the international law against military aggression. Second, the military operation had a clear and realizable military objective, which was the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of Kuwait's territorial integrity. Third, it had a coherent military strategy designed by the army and based upon its Air-Land Battle Doctrine. This strategy included the use of overwhelming force and an exit strategy; the war would end with the decisive defeat of the Iraqi army, and would not be extended to the conquest of Baghdad or the occupation of Iraq itself. Last, the war enjoyed the clearly expressed support of the American people embodied in the Congressional resolution[21] authorizing the war (Kurth 79).

As for the use of military force as a last resort, Washington made sure it first exhausted all diplomatic measures available and possible before it launched Operation Desert Storm against the Iraqi forces in Kuwait. General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, prior to the

[21] Resolution 664-August 18, 1990

Iraqi actual invasion of Kuwait, had opposed a US potential show of force that would have deterred Saddam Hussein from undertaking his act of aggression. He also showed deep reluctance to launch Desert Storm, preferring to wait for the UN sanctions to take effect, "the American people do not want their young dying for $1.5 a gallon oil," General Powell told Defence Secretary Dick Cheney (Boot 320).

Washington waited for the deadline set by a UN resolution for Iraq to leave Kuwait (January 15, 1991) to expire before starting its bombing campaign against Iraqi forces in mid-January 1991. The air campaign lasted five weeks and included incessant bombing of Iraqi positions in Kuwait and southern Iraq as well as Baghdad and Iraq's economic structure. It was then followed by a ground assault from Saudi Arabia. Operation Desert Storm ejected the Iraqi Army from Kuwait and a cease-fire ended the conflict in February (Offner 31). For the first time the United States put the combined use of its smart bombs, standoff weapons, C^3I and Global Positioning System (GPS) to the test (Magstadt 172).

The war lasted less than six weeks and cost the US and its allies not more than 378 soldiers including 147 Americans, one-fourth of whom were victims of friendly fire. The financial cost of the military campaign was borne by other coalition members namely Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Ferguson 136). It was another "splendid little war"[22] for the Americans. A jubilant welcome awaited the troops after they returned home and the popularity of President Bush rose stratospherically as a result of the cheap and quick military victory. His conduct of the war as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces showed that he had fully grasped the lessons of Vietnam with a seemingly perfect civilian leadership in wartime, by identifying clear and realistic

[22] The phrase was first used by Secretary of State John Hay in a letter he wrote to President Theodore Roosevelt after the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898. "It has been a splendid little war," he said. The phrase would then be frequently used by T. Roosevelt

objectives, providing the military with everything it needed and then getting out of their way (Bacevich, "Elusive Bargain" 246). In a Gallup Poll conducted in March 1991, the president's approval rate reached eighty-nine percent (Schulzinger 354, 364).

The decisive victory at a reasonable cost of Operation Desert Storm surpassed expectations. President Bush proudly proclaimed that the United States had at last "kicked the Vietnam syndrome" (Bush 197) because of the impressive way in which the troops performed. President Bush and his national security advisor, Brent Scowcroft, gave the Persian Gulf War the same significance as the end of the Cold War. They interpreted the liberation of Kuwait as an instance of how the Bush administration produced an amazing global transformation: "We had started self-consciously to view our actions as setting a precedent for the approaching post-Cold War world" (Bush and Scowcroft 400).

The Gulf War was of great significance for America's role and status in the post-Cold War world. First, it seemingly asserted that world stability remained the international system's overriding value. Second, it allowed Washington to show that it had perfectly assimilated the Vietnam lessons. Third, the relative ease and speed of ousting the Iraqi army from Kuwait exhibited the competence and the capabilities of US army, and, at the same time, justified the high cost of the military build-up of the preceding decade. By so doing, it demonstrated the utility of American military prowess outside the Cold-War context. Fourth, the Gulf War pre-empted anticipated calls for a drastic reduction in defence spending thereby allowing the US to maintain its military primacy. Finally, the war validated America's capacity of global leadership putting an end to forecasts that the USA was declining as a world great power (Bacevich, *American Empire* 59).

Similarly, the war had an immense impact on the validity of the US military vision. General Collin Powell, a principle largely influential steward of the Weinberger Doctrine, gained massive additional standing with the press and the American public. General Powell's own vision of war, employing overwhelming force on behalf of vital national interests, would henceforth constitute the 'new' American way of war. Operation Desert Storm seemingly demonstrated the military's precious wisdom acquired from Vietnam and restored both its image and its credibility in the eyes of an American public that had, since the Vietnam quagmire, become sceptical and disrespectful towards uniformed officials. Thanks to the success of Operation Desert Storm, Colin Powell believed, "the American people fell in love again with their armed forces" (Powell and Persico 532).

The war did indeed repair the rupture in the civil-military relations caused by the Vietnam War two decades earlier. Since Vietnam the military and the civilian leaders have been viewing each other with mistrust and suspicion; a gulf had come to separate the military from the American society as a whole. In a single stroke, victory in the First Iraq War came to heal the psychic wounds that had persisted for a whole generation. The very way in which the US conducted and concluded the war and the manner in which the American people responded to the crisis completely healed the rupture. The use of the term "troops" by the public, the press and the politicians themselves, itself conveyed a shift in attitude towards soldiers, denoting affection, respect and empathy unimaginable since Vietnam (Bacevich, *American Empire* 168).

The US conduct of the Gulf War, the cheap and quick military victory vindicated not only the Weinberger/Powell approach, but the Air-Land Battle Doctrine as well. The army made use of extraordinary mobility of the ground forces, application of sheer mass at the enemy's weak lines in addition to flexibility and surprise, with the amazing reliance on C^3I high technology (Kurth

79). The US military was much proud of the successful combination of stealth technology, PGM's and satellite aided navigation that allowed a kind of precision bombing never achieved before. It was, they enthused, the lowest number of deaths from a major air-campaign in the history of warfare. The main reason was the technology used but also the fact that the US pilots abided by strict rules requiring them to return with their bombs if they failed to positively identify their military targets. General Norman Schwarzkopf described how careful his men were in directing their attacks in such a way as to avoid civilian installations (Shaw 14-5).

Domination of information and advances in precision-guided munitions have made the prospect of predictable and perfectly controllable warfare an unchallenged reality. Colonel John A. Warden, who was the original conceiver of the Instant Thunder air campaign during the Gulf War, clearly expressed this thought:

> Precision weapons change the nature of war from one of probability to one of certainty. Wars for millennia have been probability events in which each side launched huge quantities of projectiles (and men) at one another in the hope that enough of the projectiles (and men) would kill enough of the other side to induce retreat or surrender. Probability warfare…was unpredictable, full of surprises, hard to qualify and governed by accident. Precision weapons have changed all that. In the Gulf War, we knew with near certainty that a single weapon would destroy its target. War moved into the predictable. With precision weapons, even logistics[23] become simple; …we can foresee in advance how many precision weapons will be

[23] Logistics means the organisation of movement, equipment, and accommodation of troops.

> needed to defeat an enemy – assuming of course that we are confident about getting the weapons to their targets. (qtd. in Buley 87)

The last caution referring to the technical dimension as a potential obstacle to predictability suggests that warfare is to be fundamentally regarded as a technical process, almost exclusively concerned with the way resources are managed efficiently. Rendering military force an instrument of policy that could be used with unprecedented control and discrimination became the underpinning of a vision that was becoming the nation's preferred way of war, that of immaculate destruction. (85)

The media-management proved quite successful. Vietnam had taught the Americans how public opinion decisively counts in both the conduct and the outcome of the war. The Gulf War was consequently also fought in the media. The US enclosed most journalists at a US base in Saudi Arabia where they were given briefings; it confined their presence on the battlefield to rotated trips with troops; and it made public shows of technological successes rather than dead bodies. Only a few independents could venture outside these US controlled environments. Coverage of Operation Desert Storm was mostly pro-war, public opinion remained overwhelmingly positive after fighting began and the war was seen by the public as an amazing success (Shaw 16).

Operation Desert Storm was seen by the public as a master piece in terms of military triumph, an amazing demonstration of how unbeatable the Americans had become in the art of warfare. It was a show of precision guidance – most noticeably in the image of 'smart' bombs entering command centres or of the *tomahawk* cruise missiles, fired from an old battleship adapted for the purpose stationing 1,000 kilometres away, finding its way through the streets of Baghdad,

penetrating its target by the front door and ultimately exploding. It was also a show of how targets were chosen with care and attacked with confidence and 'minimal' civil casualties. It was a spectacle of force that worked to Washington's best advantage (Freedman 12).

Although the Gulf War did in essence conform to the classical American way of war, it did actually divert from it in some essential ways. The five major features of the distinctive classical strategic culture were all available in the Persian Gulf War, including reliance on overwhelming mass, wide-ranging mobility, high technology weapons system, considerable public support for the war effort, and, finally, reliance upon allied countries. The innovations however, included total reliance on AVF, the All-Volunteer Force that brought immense transformations in the quality of the US army. They also included the way in which new highly developed technologies allowed for the integration, coordination and synchronization of the actions of the different military services, which significantly reduced the fog of war. Last, but foremost, and in accordance with America's aversion to the human cost of war, the Persian Gulf War highlighted the capacity of RMA, AVF and the Weinberger doctrine in greatly reducing US casualties.

Actually, unlike America's major classical wars, the Persian Gulf War had a significantly low cost in terms of human casualties. No more than 147 American soldiers fell in the conflict. RMA had seemingly succeeded in endowing the USA with a greater ability to reduce the human cost of its wars. Was it the dream of non-lethal warfare coming true? The war was almost non-lethal for the USA and the coalition members as they significantly escaped massive human losses; US civilian and military leaders have seemingly assimilated the most significant of the Vietnam lessons to the point of perfection. If America was to obtain and maintain public support for its military endeavours, it had first to guarantee the safety of the bulk of its troops. If a democracy was to make war then it had to assure, not that the object of war be necessarily just, but that the

human cost of that same war be low, enough as to not cause the public to rise against the government.

As for the losing side, although figures for Iraqi deaths remain uncertain, estimates of the Iraqi battle deaths vary between 25,000 and 250,000 as a result of extensive bombardments of large troop concentration. USA and coalition forces entirely and ruthlessly decimated the defeated retreating Iraqi Army on the "highway of death"[24] in 1991 (Schulzinger 364). The war turned out to be a real human agony for the innocent Iraqi people as well, a fact that obviously troubles the common sense of morality. Fought against the mainland of a populated country, the campaign completely damaged the infrastructure on which civilians depended. The US aircraft had flown about 110,000 sorties against Iraq, dropping 88,500 tons of bombs, including cluster bombs and depleted uranium devices. It destroyed food processing and water purification plants, electric power stations, bridges, roads, schools, hospitals and telephone exchanges throughout the entire country (Johnson 225).

In the aftermath of the war, the country was plunged in a state of chaos and preindustrial life conditions. Hospitals and sewage treatment plants could not function in the absence of electricity. Epidemics ravaged the country in the absence of drinking water. The United Nations' observers reported near apocalyptic life situation in Iraq and a group of specialists from Harvard had foreseen the death of at least 170,000 children under five because of the delayed effects of the war. A huge number of innocent Iraqi people lost their lives due to the bombing of infrastructure; more than 100,000 died from dysentery, malnutrition, diseases and dehydration. Many more would succumb to the punitive economic sanctions imposed on Iraq (Hendrickson 73-9).

[24] Highway 80 between Kuwait and Iraq, used by Iraqi armed divisions in their attempt to retreat before being attacked by the coalition forces.

The US military intervention in the Gulf directly and indirectly precipitated the death of a still unknown number of civilian Iraqis, while only a few hundreds of Western troops died. Yet the Gulf War was very popular and was deemed successful in both the USA and in the Western countries (Shaw 18). The USA could now, it turned out, go to war, thanks to the new technological possibilities embodied in RMA, while sparing its population the horrors of being involved in war, not disrupting their daily lives in the process. The innovations in America's way of war transformed the American citizen into a mere spectator of a war his country is making with an utter human and moral detachment (Quester 125). This low-cost way of war guarantees the support of a public who now perceives its country's military adventures as a remote vision with which they are not necessarily concerned.

General Westmoreland had predicted as early as 1969 the possibility to "replace whenever possible the man with the machine" by taking full advantage of the new technologies (qtd. in Buley 97). Using force with unmatched accuracy would put an end to the controversies associated with collateral damage and the likelihood of hostile reprisals against American forces. Similarly, Senator Barry Goldwater, arguing in July 1970 for moving to an All-Volunteer Force, expressed the thought that the Army, which is "the great user of man" was depending more and more on the electronic battlefield. (qtd. in Buley 97) The prediction came true and was applied on the battlefield during the First Gulf War. Turning to high technology to reduce reliance on man in an attempt to align into the nation's aversion to casualties turned war into nothing more than a spectacle to the American citizen. The Pentagon's number of estimated US casualties was more than 100 times the actual losses the US suffered. (88)

To restore the political utility of force in a nation with such a high concern over casualties and collateral damage, it was necessary to supplant General Sherman's "War is Hell" discourse,

based on the assumption that the chaos of war could in no way be subjected to rational constraints, by a cleaner and more humane way of war. During the Gulf War, however, there still prevailed echoes of the "War is Hell" discourse. General Norman Schwarzkopf, during the course of the war, kept next to him a copy of Sherman's motto: "War is the remedy our enemies have chosen. And I say let us give them all they want" (Hoffman 89). Similarly, Colin Powell spoke of cutting off the Iraqi army and then killing it echoing the same brutality inherent in the American way of making war (Buley 88).

President Saddam's invasion of Kuwait seems to have been the perfect occasion for the US to show off its military might to its best advantage. It was a perfect opportunity to demonstrate to itself and to the whole world that Washington was still that military giant who won WWII and who was worth admiration, respect and fear. It was an immeasurable chance to restore its credibility and to exorcise the Vietnam demons. No significant challenges appeared; no chronic deficiencies in resources or logistics took place. In the words of the Gulf War Air Power Survey, it was not "merely...a conducive environment for the successful application of Western-style air power" but "circumstances...so ideal as to approach being the best that could be reasonably hoped for in any future conflict" (qtd. in Freedman 13).

Despite the jubilance that victory in the Gulf War gave birth to, it is worth noting that the war was indeed almost fully one-sided. Iraq was not that powerful contender to America's hegemony, not a match – or even close – to its military capabilities to deserve the label of test case. What actually and genuinely happened was an assault made by the USA and the coalition forces under the auspices of the UN against an enemy that was totally out-classed and out-gunned. How far could such a confrontation possibly validate the doctrines, made and applied in the aftermath

of Vietnam, as to the creation of an American way of war worth Washington's international post-cold war status?

The successful outcome of the war was a short-term accomplishment resulting from the marriage of a set of favourable factors. These factors included encouraging international and political conditions, limited goals, air pre-eminence, strategic and technological advantages, the low level of US casualties, and the effective media management. Ensuing events would question the alleged success of the Gulf War, however. The failed Kurd insurrections, for example, led to disastrous suffering and repression of the Iraqi people. The destruction of electricity, water and sewage systems resulted in a long-term high death toll and agony. The failure to manage the political and international difficulties to deal with the Saddam regime led to serious outcomes including the unbearable economic sanctions and the impoverishment of huge numbers of Iraqis over the following decade. The constant bombing to enforce the no-fly zones in the north and in the south of Iraq and many other events would lead to much reluctance in using the word 'success' that confidently (Shaw 17).

The political and military significance of the immediate outcome of the war seems to have created immeasurable possibilities for the New World Order that President Bush had proclaimed. The war had, for sure, its positive effects in breaking Iraqi military power, dissuading Saddam Hussein's intentions to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and securing American access to the Gulf oil resources. It also highlighted the importance of America's military might in the post-Cold War world to maintain peace and stability. If perceived in retrospect, however, the liberation of Kuwait ended up being decidedly of minimal significance to the era that it inaugurated.

Nevertheless, who would dare challenge the USA with a direct military threat after its amazing show of force during Operation Desert Storm? It became apparently very probable, after

the Gulf War, that the Pentagon's amazing conventional military capabilities developed thanks to an unprecedented revolution in military affairs, might become unused if not totally practically useless. That raised, once more, serious concerns, among the uniformed officers and all those who had great interest in keeping the military build-up so successfully enlarged during the Cold War and so amazingly used during the Gulf War, about the uses and the utility of this gigantic military might. If the American show of force did manage to deter anyone from challenging the new world order, then what would America's war making capabilities be necessary for?

Military force, however, would always be meant to be used if not in actual wars then in other missions it would be called to perform. These might include any variety of military operations other than war (MOOTW), ranging from peacekeeping to humanitarian assistance and humanitarian interventions. The presence of potential crises that necessitate such operations would prevent an actual budget cut and a reduced relevance of military force (Quester 127). If this was unquestionably a matter of a Pentagon scrambling to maintain its budget and justify the magnitude of its existence – even when the real need for its services diminished – it also was undeniably a matter of international necessity. The post-Cold War world would be completely different from President Bush's envisaged world order. The fall of the Berlin Wall had actually given birth to an array of problems and issues that necessitated commensurate consideration and intervention. These same issues and problems successfully prevented the accumulated and amazingly developed war fighting capabilities from becoming obsolete.

Many would, in fact, dare contradict Washington despite the expected broad salutary effect of the American military exhibition in the Persian Gulf in dissuading people around the world from challenging US authority. In the aftermath of the liberation of Kuwait, President Bush enthused: "I would think, because of what had happened, we won't have to use U.S. forces around the world.

I think when we say something is objectively correct...people are going to listen." (Bush, "The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Conflict") A few people did not listen, though, or, in listening, came up with different conclusions. Notwithstanding the startling and impressive show of America's military might in Operation Desert Storm, it would not manage to preclude effective and numerous instances of resistance to US policy. America's military might would soon prove of limited utility in imposing America's will. The Gulf War would thus in both the short as well as the long run highlight the rather shaky ground on which the New World Order stood. The bipolar world of the Cold War seemed much easier to predict and manage than the new complex post-Cold War environment. The Cold War had undeniably forced a measure of discipline on the international system, but the demise of the Soviet Union let loose long repressed centrifugal forces. The result was, rather than a new world order, a world of bigger disorder infecting areas of sharp sensitivity; Saddam Hussein's act of aggression was the first manifestations of this disorder, but, by no means, the last (Bacevich, *American Empire* 61).

The American marvellous military might in Desert Storm that inspired awe and deference in some quarters of the globe, would lead to bigger opposition to America's global leadership in others. Many were unwilling to abide by the rules of President Bush's new world order. They actually perceived weaknesses where the others might have seen strength. US expectation that its high technology would provide it with a decisive edge dissuading anyone from ever challenging its authority and thus making the very use of its military might unnecessary would turn out to be the most significant of its mistakes.

Actually, the United States would, under the presidency of George W.H. Bush, find itself employing its troops more frequently rather than less in many new and distant areas. In 1991, the president committed US forces to protecting Iraqi Kurds and Shiites from the depredations of

President Saddam before ultimately quasi-permanent no-fly-zones were created in the north and in the south of Iraq, patrolled by US aircraft. President Saddam's ruthless crushing of the Shiite and of the Kurd Iraqis had been the result of a miscalculation of allowing Iraq to fly armed helicopters in the south and in the north of Iraq in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War. The miscalculation allowed the Iraqi president to grab a political victory out of his military defeat and to bully and murder all his opponents so as to guarantee the indefinite survival of his repressive regime (Magstadt 173). President Bush would also – contrary to his own expectations – send US troops, the following year, into harm's way in Somalia for the sake of a humanitarian intervention and would likewise inaugurate in the waning days of his tenure the US regular practice of using pinprick air attacks against Iraq to express dissatisfaction with Pr. Saddam's defiance (Schulzinger 365).

On February 28, 1991, recording the congratulations he was receiving from his subordinates after the end of the Gulf War, Pr. Bush noted that he was experiencing "no feelings of euphoria. It hasn't been a clean end; there is no battleship *Missouri* surrender[25]. This is what's missing to make this akin to WWII, to separate Kuwait from Korea and Vietnam." (qtd. in Bacevich, *American Empire* 62) The president was feeling disappointed as he sensed that the success of Operation Desert Storm did leave much unresolved. By the end of his term, he ultimately ceased using the phrase 'new world order'. (Bacevich, *American Empire* 63)

Not only did the spectacular military victory leave much unresolved, but it would immediately be "highly counterproductive," as Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security adviser to President Jimmy Carter, had predicted before Operation Desert Storm started, simply

[25] On September, 2nd, 1945, the Japanese signed their surrender aboard the battleship U.S.S. Missouri, marking the end of hostilities in WWII.

because the US interests at stake in the area were neither vital nor urgent so as to necessitate an American military intervention. Admiral William J. Crow, Colin Powell's predecessor as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had also warned against an acute exacerbation of already existing tensions in the Middle East if the US came to initiate hostilities in the region. Deploying US troops to the Middle East would, according to both, inflame the Arab world, stir up Middle Eastern politics and alienate America's European allies (Bacevich, *American Empire* 64).

Many critics would later on blame the Bush administration for not removing Pr. Saddam Hussein from power when it had the chance to do it after the liberation of Kuwait. One important political dimension of the 1991 Gulf War was that the US then wanted to achieve consensus over the war both inside and outside, before and after the war. Besides, the Bush administration had no desire to occupy Iraq and indulge in the complex and costly process of nation building in a society pregnant with deep ethnic and religious divisions. A regime change in Iraq would have certainly given birth to a civil war, irrevocably destabilized the region and would certainly have tempted neighbouring states including Turkey, Iran and Syria to meddle in Iraqi internal affairs (Magstadt 172).

Victory in the Gulf War, however, significantly altered the political-military balance in the Middle East to the advantage of the United States. US military bases were now ringing Iraq from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the south to Turkey in the north; tanks and ammunition were prepositioned in case hostilities were reopened. These came to reinforce the already existing formidable US naval fleet in the Mediterranean and Arab Gulf (Johnson 226). The UN economic sanctions would persist to force Pr. Saddam to comply with the UN order to disarm and the no-fly zones would be enforced in the north and in the south to both contain and deter the Iraqi president from defying the will of the USA and the international community (Magstadt 173).

Conclusion

The Reagan administration inaugurated an era of military reform that completely transformed the balance of power to the American advantage. A revolution in military affairs included the development of conventional, non-nuclear emerging technologies (ET) including C^3I (control, command, communication and information) and PGM (precision- guided munitions). It gave birth to the Air-Land Battle Doctrine coherently integrating air power and land power to fight and win a potential conventional war against the Soviet Union. RMA brought the prospect of predictable, controllable and humane warfare that would transcend the Republic's aversion to casualties.

The Soviets tried to keep the pace with the American military innovations by introducing a series of reforms that eventually led, together with other factors, to the collapse of the Soviet empire. The Cold War was over. Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the subsequent US intervention under the auspices of the UN and with the aim of preserving President George Bush's proclaimed New World Order inaugurated the post-Cold War era. The Gulf War led to the vindication of America's indispensable role in the post-Cold War world and the new way of war. It was a return to America's tradition of splendid little wars fought now with high-tech weapons and within preconceived conditions. Yet this new American way of war was still lacking in its ability to deal with long-term consequences that transcend the immediate military victory; therefore, the United States will face more rather than less opposition to its hegemony. Actually, the world would witness, in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, an increasing US military presence and intervention rate in many corners of the world.

CHAPTER FOUR

America's Humanitarian Wars: A Double Oxymoron

> What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy?
>
> Mahatma Gandhi

Introduction

The end of the Cold war gave birth to a seemingly more dangerous and less predictable world. In this new world order, American leadership and military prowess were of momentous urgency to face and stop challenges to worldwide peace and stability. These challenges have now a new nature and do consequently require new solutions. The Weinberger/Powell Doctrine, the Air-Land Doctrine and the revolution in military affairs gave birth to a new American way of war vindicated by the US crushing victory in the First Gulf War. Yet, US unprecedented military might could in no way dissuade opposition to its hegemony. Although Operation Desert Storm was another "splendid little war" in the annals of American military victories, it did fail to inaugurate an era of world peace.

This chapter puts to test the new American Way of war within the sensitive context of humanitarian intervention. It first portrays the multi-level interconnectedness of the post-Cold War world as a result of globalisation and the immediate destabilising effect that the latter had on the monopoly of legitimate organised force by sovereign states. It also describes how economic considerations came to be flagrantly and dangerously intertwined with US national security. The

chapter dwells then into the nature of the new interventionism and details America's humanitarian interventions in the Balkans in the 1990's. It shows the new American way of war in action responding to defiance of the will of the United Nations. It then analyses the contradictions inherent in humanitarian wars and the bigger contradictions in the use of the new American way of war for humanitarian purposes. It ends with a discussion of the newer version of this way of war and how it affected the utility of force.

1.1 The Importance of American Military Force in a Globalised World

Most Americans believed in mid-1991 that the amazing popularity President George H.W. Bush had earned during the Persian Gulf War would certainly lead to a crushing victory over any democratic candidate in the 1992 presidential elections. The American public, however, throughout 1992 was demanding that the emphasis the president put on foreign affairs had now to be relocated on domestic economic growth. Those who had given President Bush a stratospheric approval rate after US victory in Operation Desert Storm, were now anxious about the lingering recession, about their future and the future of their children and decided to withdraw their support from him to give it to his democratic contender, Bill Clinton (Schulzinger 366). Unlike his predecessor, President Bill Clinton was articulate, intellectual, idealist and much comfortable in the realm of ideas, visions and abstractions (Magstadt 177). He possessed one asset that would allow him to leave his fingerprint on the conduct of American foreign policy. He was an alert observer of the forces that were quickly and irreversibly transforming his society as well as the whole world. He understood the impact of culture and technology on his country. He was fully aware how foreign policy and economic policy have turned so closely related that they became interchangeable and was noticeably flexible in his principles. This made of him a naturally gifted

politician, one that seemingly held the promise, in the aftermath of the Cold War, of a US grand strategy designer (Bacevich, *American Empire* 91).

The victory of the democrats in the 1993 presidential elections re-inaugurated an era of national meditation over the foreign policy to be devised in the absence of the Soviet threat. The search for a purpose that would determine US grand strategy led to a debate. Each group had a different perception of the nature of the post-Cold War world. Some regarded the end of the Cold War as the end of history with liberal democracy constituting "the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." (Fukuyama xi) The end of history in this specific context means the end of ideological conflicts that had characterised the last sixty years of human history resulting respectively in WWI, WWII and the Cold War. Many were thus developing the theory of democratic peace, based on the ideas of Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant. The theory rests upon the idea of the complete global surrender to the dynamism of western values of economic and mainly political freedom. The transformation of autocratic regimes into democratic systems would imply that in the modern world no more wars were likely to take place among democracies (Russett). The USA had consequently to undertake the endeavour of advancing liberal democracy in the former Soviet Union and in Latin America and South Africa. With America's military eminence, evident to everyone, neoconservative commentator Charles Krauthammer was already discussing “the unipolar moment”, in an article published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1991 (23-33), while Joseph Nye, from a liberal perspective developed the concept of “soft power” based on co-opting rather than coercing as an organizational pattern of international behaviour (“Soft Power” 153-71). Nye argued: “when one country gets other countries to want what it wants – might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering

others to do what it wants." (*Bound to Lead*, 219) Above all other nations, the USA seemed to combine amazing military, economic and even soft power.

A variety of options and an unprecedented degree of freedom with respect to national security policy were available to the Clinton administration. The nature of the few existing foreign threats determined the choice of the stance of national security policy. If no substantial threat to American security existed, now with the Soviet Union demised, then a return to normalcy had to be the first option. Yet too many US institutions and interests did depend on the continuing existence of some kind of international threat, namely the military services and the global rather than national nature of US economy in the 1990's. Expanding American interests and investments spread now everywhere in the world and, as a consequence both the expanding business and the military services, intent on preserving the status quo, rejected the no-threat option (Kurth 82). In the post-Cold War world, it became unquestionably clear that geo-economics came to increasingly drive geopolitics, contrary to the Cold War agenda where geopolitics used to drive geo-economics (Dumbrell 83).

National Security adviser Tony Lake tried to sell the democratic enlargement slogan to replace containment. Democratic enlargement had economics at its heart and could be achieved through enlarging the world's free community of market democracies. Although the strategy never succeeded in being implemented, it captured the essence of the coming Clinton years: positioning the USA at the heart of economic globalisation would be the central and integrating purpose of foreign policy (Dumbrell 86). Openness was the one big idea behind President Clinton's grand strategy. The removal of all global barriers to the flow of capital, ideas, people and goods allowed for an integrated international order favourably conducive to American interests. The strategy of openness derives from two major ideas. First, vigorous and continuing economic growth is an

absolute imperative simply because prosperity has long become a precondition for preserving domestic harmony in the United States. Second, the internal American market could no longer be sufficient for the sustenance of the basic level of economic development. Lucrative new outlets for trade or investment were to be opened so that American prosperity can be sustained (Bacevich, *American Empire* 85).

The strategy of openness does not merely aim at increasing market share of interest because, in the age of globalisation, economic considerations and national security have become inseparable. Like peace, trade requires order, adherence to norms that Washington establishes. Trade does also determine America's priorities and decisions. "Open and competitive commerce will enrich us as a nation," confirmed President Clinton in a Speech at American University Centennial Celebration in 1993; consequently, it was "time for us to make trade a priority element of American security." He promised a comprehensive trade policy that would "open other nations' markets and establish clear and enforceable rules on which to expand trade." The entire world would benefit from political and economic openness, but the United States would have to benefit most. Globalisation had then to be used by the Unites States to nurture its interests everywhere in the world.

The process of globalisation had already been underway in the 1980's and intensified in the 1990's; global interconnectedness, whether political, economic, military or even cultural, grew amazingly stronger during the Clinton years. Globalisation, as a quantitatively new phenomenon, mainly grew out of the revolution in military technologies and in communication and data processing. Its most important manifestation was the end of the Cold War itself, which can adequately be interpreted as the triumph of globalisation in the very way the Eastern bloc

unequivocally succumbed to its encroachment and drastically opened up to the rest of the world (Kaldor 4-5).

According to President Clinton's Secretary of Defence, William Cohen, the information revolution brought about "a worldwide transition from military industrial economies reliant upon government capital to information-based economies reliant on intellectual capital." (qtd in Bacevich, *American Empire* 36) A trend that, he believed, was virtually transforming every single aspect of life, a significant motor force for change. In the era of globalization, markets are opened, industries and services deregulated, and new information technologies strongly affecting trading and cross-border flows of capital (Berdal 118). The president himself exposed how the information technology was revolutionising the world by eliminating distance, "the world is growing smaller and smaller," he declared (qtd. in Bacevich, *American Empire* 37). In the era of globalization, where everything, everywhere is interconnected, American economic interests are more difficult to protect and, consequently, military power will remain vital to back up those continuously mushrooming interests.

Taken from its narrow economic context, globalization, as the intensification of global, political, economic, military and cultural interconnectedness has a big impact on the changing character of political authority. One important implication of this global interconnectedness is the erosion of the monopoly of legitimate organized violence by modern states, which in turn has serious repercussions for the future of territorially based sovereignty, or modern states. The monopoly of military force by modern states is eroded in two different ways: from above and from below. Erosion from above has resulted from the way in which military forces have been transnationalized starting from the two world wars. This transnationalization was then institutionalized by the bloc system during the Cold War and by the uncountable transnational

connections between armed forces that developed in the aftermath of WWII. The transnationalization of military forces greatly weakened the capacity of states to make war against each other unilaterally first because military technology has grown increasingly destructive and states increasingly interconnected especially in the military field. Second, a form of global military integration grew out of international arms production and trade, military alliances, military exchange and cooperation and arms control agreements – to cite only a few examples. Third, the evolution of international norms regarding the use of force condemns unilateral aggression as illegitimate. This was first codified in the Kellogg-Brian Pact of 1828[26] and then reinforced in the United Nations Charter and through the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crimes trials[27] (Kaldor 4-6).

The monopoly is also eroded from below in states where corruption, criminality and incompetence are widespread as a result of a declined economy and an increasing privatization of violence. Organized crime and paramilitary groups are the most obvious symptoms. The disappearance of political legitimacy in some modern states is clearly visible in the fusion of "domestic civility" embodied in the soldier or policeman as legitimate combatant and "external barbarity" embodied in the criminal as non-combatant. Consequently, a new type of organized violence, although less extreme than wars among states, but more pervasive and long lasting,

[26] The Kellogg-Briand Pact was an agreement to outlaw war. The Kellogg–Briand Pact or Pact of Paris – officially the General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy – is an international agreement on peace signed on August 27, 1928 by Germany, France, and the United States and by most other states soon after. The signatory states promised not to use war to resolve conflicts or disputes, which might arise among them. Sponsored by France and the U.S., the Pact is named after its authors, United States Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg and French foreign minister Aristide Briand. The pact was concluded outside the League of Nations and remains in effect.

[27] The Nuremberg Trial and the Tokyo War Crimes Trials (1945–1948) were the first international criminal tribunals established in the aftermath of World War II to prosecute high-level political officials and military authorities for war crimes and other wartime atrocities by the victorious Allied governments. The four major Allied powers—France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States—set up the International Military Tribunal (IMT) in Nuremberg, Germany, to prosecute and punish "the major war criminals of the European Axis." The IMT presided over a combined trial of senior Nazi and Japanese political and military leaders, as well as several Nazi organizations.

emerged (Kaldor 6-7). The erosion of state monopoly of organized violence both from above and from below, as a result of globalization, made the post-Cold War world less predictable and more dangerous.

While conservatives contended that the fall of the Soviet Union would change nothing about the basic force of nationalism and power-maximizing attitude of dictatorial states, liberals argued that the end of the Cold War changed the international system despite the fact that nationalism is still present in world politics. That is so because, as mentioned earlier, the forces of globalisation, including economic democratisation, interdependence, and the evolution in the number and diversity of international organisations was increasingly and rapidly eroding the independence and the sovereignty of the traditional nation-state. This process of globalisation and the ensuing erosion of the sovereignty of the nation-state are not sudden new phenomena; the process has been under way for a long time as change is constant in history. In such a scenario, it becomes uncertain whether the state is still the primary actor in international politics. The implications of such a reality on the USA is that, instead of having to be a lone superpower comfortably dealing with lesser powers, it would rather have to deal with these new contenders as equals. Despite the newly rising economies, the USA was still, in the aftermath of the Cold War, an unequalled economic giant – actually, the US economy was equal to the joint economic power of the next four richest states (Britain, France, Germany and Japan). Nevertheless, the rapidly increasing dispersion of power in the end of the twentieth century was changing the rules of the international power-game (Magstadt 28).

Essentially, post-Cold War world politics, according to Joseph Nye, looks now more like a complex three-dimensional chess-game. Militarily speaking, the world is largely unipolar, but economically, the United States is not a hegemon and must quite often bargain with the

economically growing Europe as an equal. The bottom chessboard is the basis of transnational relations. This includes actors and entities other than governments like traders, bankers, tourists, but also hackers and terrorists. Power is largely dispersed in this bottom board in such a way that there is no point in speaking of hegemony, unipolarity and multipolarity. If in a three-dimensional game, you concentrate solely on the top board and fail to pay attention to the other boards and the vertical links among them, you lose. It is important to make a difference between the utility of hard power and soft power in such a complex world. Hard power means using military and economic instruments to intimidate and coerce other countries into compliance, collaboration, or acquiescence. This cannot be achieved unless threats are made credible by strong deeds. For the USA, a country that relies predominantly on the use of force in the conduct of its foreign policy, intermittent military intervention is required to maintain credibility ("The New Rome").

In an interconnected world based on competition and an economic power that is largely measured in services and goods and where producers are not restricted or even really inhibited by borders, soft power resources are vital. Undoubtedly, the United States possesses gigantic hard-power capabilities, but doubt arises when it comes to soft-power assets. Even if soft power and hard power are theoretically mutually reinforcing; in practice, though, if hard power is used unilaterally, too frequently or frivolously, it will inevitably undermine the utility of soft power. In the complex, interconnected post-Cold War world, soft power is undoubtedly a major player on Nye's lower chessboard, there where real battles are highly susceptible to be fought (Magstadt 29).

Even in its economic context, Globalisation is not an exclusively natural phenomenon. Fundamental shifts in transaction costs do produce noticeable flows of capital, goods and services, but the ensuing processes are in no way naturally inherent in the very functioning of international markets. It is rather the result of actual and extremely politicised institutions, directly linked to the

USA, serving its own definite national political and economic interests. Within America's search for purpose in the post-Cold War world, globalisation has become a central pillar. It is used as a means to induce different governments to local organisational adjustments along US preferred neo-liberal economic lines. This is meant to foster the continuing formation and when necessary re-formation of a system of political, economic and military alliances controlled by the US. This nurtures the tendencies of uneven economic development inherent in capitalism. Instead of bringing economic prosperity for all, and economically homogenizing the different regions of the globe, it does reproduce the uneven growth of capitalism in a protracted form. The most obvious consequence is a kind of modernisation that confers profits to some regions and groups, but not to others (Fouskas 8).

The new era of globalization was an excellent opportunity for human-rights activists within the Clinton democratic administration to make their project genuinely universal. Believing in the Wilsonian conception of the universality of American values, growing out of the 1960's civil-rights movement, they managed to advance their cause of humanitarian-intervention option thanks to the existence of global universal American interests. These took the form of multinational corporations and financial institutions much interested in the ideology and the useful legitimacy of the project of universal human rights emphasising open societies and enforcing individual rights against repressive governments. As a result, both human rights organizations, as well as the Democratic Party received substantial funds from business people. This in turn enabled those organisations to have substantial power within the Democratic Party. The human-rights activists would play a persistently vigorous role in pushing the Clinton administration to in turn push the U.S. military into humanitarian interventions (Kurth 82).

The military transformation was already under way to better meet the various new challenges to the globalised world stability and consequently to America's interests within it. In addition to the array of global human disasters potentially calling for US intervention, other kinds of challenges threatened to inaugurate an era of persistent conflict, according to many pessimists within the political and military establishments. These would come in the form of rogue states, terrorists, drug cartels, and dictators armed with weapons of mass destruction, to list only a few. To face those enemies and to, at the same time, guarantee a stable peaceful world, the United States was now endowed with a variety of military innovations, including high-tech weaponry and precise-targeting sensors and systems. These would allow its military to engage in combat, humanitarian and stability operations while restricting collateral damage to civilians and properties and without the need of US soldiers to be physically present on the battlefields. This technological supremacy seemed to be a perfect solution to maintain a credible rationale for the use of military power as a tool of foreign policy at a time when interstate warfare was increasingly becoming a historical anachronism (Carr Chapter 8).

The beginning of the 1990's saw the birth of a new doctrine that some scholars called the new interventionism. This emerged out of the marriage of the necessity of crusading liberal internationalism and of a belief that civil war is a legitimate concern of international security. It was based on the idea that the international community had a moral obligation and that the United Nations had to be available to arbitrate domestic conflicts throughout the world. As early as 1993, Stephen John Stedman foresaw a more increasingly expansive role for the USA in world affairs, "until the United States and United Nations ultimately take on tasks for which they are ill prepared, leaving themselves embroiled in numerous internal conflicts without the will or resources to bring peace to any" (318). The following decade would literally confirm Stedman's prophecy.

President Clinton had indeed, during his presidential campaign, blamed his Republican contender for ignoring human rights abuse abroad, his defence of potentates and dictators, which has been a disservice not only to America's democratic values, but also to its national interest. For Clinton, U.S. foreign policy must promote democracy and defend freedom all over the world, not only because this would reflect America's deepest values; but also because freedom and democracy were vital to its national interests. Once elected, President Clinton reaffirmed his approach. In his inaugural address, he announced that not only would he use force to defend America's vital interests, but promised to act whenever "the will of the international community is defied." (Clinton, the First Inaugural Address)

To the humanitarian-intervention option, gaining much strength within the administration's circle, was added the new-enemy option. With the demise of the Soviet Union, and the dismissing of the no-threat option due to the dangerous interconnectedness of the post- Cold War world, each of the military services had its own new version of treats to American security. The army, already focussing on North Korea and Iraq as rogue states potentially threatening US interests, had to face the civilian officials within the Clinton administration and the Democratic Party in general. The latter would, rather than consider the urgency of fighting rogue states, send the army into other foreign countries to protect and promote human rights through humanitarian interventions meant to further their liberal projects. The Navy was still focussing on a possible deployment along the very long Chinese coast bordering the Pacific; the fact that China still had a Communist regime would undeniably justify such a deployment (Kurth 82-3). President Clinton and his democratic party would have none of that, however, the armed forces would be used to address major humanitarian crises around the world rather than deal with rogue and communist states.

The forces of nationalism were actually rapidly growing in Europe, in Africa and in Asia and were resulting in full-scale decolonization. Though initially resisted, those forces had then to be accommodated by the great powers in the aftermath of WWII. Closely intertwined with the conduct of the Cold War, the process of decolonization concluded at the same time with the implosion of Soviet-style European Communism. Fifteen new states were created out of the Soviet Union as a result of the termination of satellite status for eastern and central European states. The expectations that the end of the Cold War would create a more orderly world would soon be smashed by decolonisation making the post-Cold War world more disorderly (Freedman 29-30).

Decolonization has a contradictory legacy: both the significance of sovereignty and the moral power of self-determination were simultaneously enhanced. Essentially nation-state has in itself been a problematic concept as states were not all organised on the basis of homogenous, coherent nations. Nations are based on bonds of ethnicity, religion, language and culture. While people give their loyalty to nations, belonging to states requires that loyalty to be given to existing laws and institutions that do govern those nations. Tensions, inherent in the very nature and structure of such states, have been managed through a variety of constitutional devices so as to forge shared identities and loyalties that can transcend those national differences. The deficient processes of decolonisation and the fact that several states do contain more than one nation, while one same nation is often scattered in more than one state, however, have accentuated these differences. The rapid proliferation of states, in most cases unprepared in the realm of self-government and consequently unable to monopolise violence within their own borders, became a key source of post-Cold War global disorder (Freedman 30).

Globalization with its irreversibly growing interconnectedness, together with a rapid process of decolonisation became the major features of the 1990's. The erosion of state autonomy

both from above and from below, the inability to monopolise violence as an essential prerequisite for internal security seemed to be the reversal process of the way in which modern states have been created. Instead of disappearing in the new world climate, wars took on a new shape. The collapse of the Soviet Union had a devastatingly destabilizing effect and changed the task of the USA from waging wars to managing wars now taking place on the very margins of Western Europe (Kaldor 7).

The shift towards democracy-promotion in US policy created a favourable environment for human rights throughout the world. This was consolidated in UN thinking during the early post – Cold War years especially with the US short-term victory over Iraq and the synergy created between American power and global leadership as a result of Bush Senior's proclamation of a new world order (Shaw 18). The promotion of democracy and humanitarian ideals seemed to have a significant opportunity for success, as the UN was no longer paralysed by the superpower deadlock.

1.2 President Clinton's Humanitarian Wars

Former president Bush Senior had deployed about 28,000 army troops and marines to the East African starving and civil war torn country of Somalia, as part of a UN sponsored force sent to secure the environment within which food would reach the mouths of the innocent starving population. The aim was to distribute relief supplies and then immediately leave (Boot 322). The success of Operation Restore hope, however, led President Clinton to expand the mission. The new purpose was now brokering a solution to Somalia's continuing civil war and rebuilding Somali civic and political institutions. About 8,000 US logistical stayed in Somalia and the USA did actually embark on a multinational nation-building complex and highly costly path (Schulzinger 373). The conflicting warlords rejected foreign meddling in Somali affairs and

declared war on UNOSOM II[28]. Ironically, in an attempt to capture Mohamed Farah Aideed, the chief warlord, "the hunters became the hunted" in the back streets of Mogadishu (Hyland 56).

Television pictures of suffering Somalia that in 1992 roused Americans to action, did now expose the horror of the desecration of the US soldier's body after two US helicopters were shot down by Somali forces who killed 18 Americans, and dragged a soldier's body through the streets of Mogadishu (Offner 35). The Black Hawk Down fiasco, as it came to be known, ended the military adventure. President Clinton announced the termination of US presence in Somalia altogether. He officially declared that America had "obligations elsewhere" and that it was not Washington's job to "rebuild Somalia society," (qtd. in Hyland 58) clearly rejecting his own campaign's policies of multilateral peacekeeping and humanitarian objectives.

The failure in Somalia drastically affected America's future decisions to militarily intervene in situations that were considered similar to Mogadishu's, as actually happened when the whole international community was silently and passively watching the genocide in Rwanda, (Hippel 168) where 800,000 civilians were slaughtered in the space of a hundred days (Offner 35). It also led to great confusion and hesitation dealing with the diaspora resulting from the disintegration of the Soviet empire in Europe. Managing European security in the post-Cold War world was no easy task. The uneven democratic forces sweeping through the former Soviet Union, central and Eastern Europe, together with the economic crises emerging from the collapse of communism both yielded serious side effects in areas that were home to mixed minority groups,

[28] UNOSOM II (United Nations Operation in Somalia II) was the second phase of the United Nations intervention in Somalia, from March 1993 until March 1995, after the country had become involved in civil war in 1991. UNOSOM II carried on from the United States-controlled (UN-sanctioned) Unified Task Force (UNITAF). The first phase, UNOSOM I, endeavored to provide, facilitate, and secure humanitarian relief in Somalia, as well as to monitor the first UN-brokered ceasefire of the Somali Civil War.

many of these harboured grievances against each other for past offences committed. While a few reformed states succeeded to accommodate this resurgence of nationalism, with its demands for the right to self-determination and for minority recognition, as in Romania, others failed and had to face either complete dissolution, as in the former Czechoslovakia, or destructive war, as in Chechnya, or both dissolution and war as in the former Yugoslavia (Hippel 127-8). Yugoslavia was a perfect ground for nationalist demagogues to exploit economic hardships and political unrest to their own favour. Nationalist passions were unleashed in their most brutal manifestations in the complex federation of Yugoslavia where the imbroglio contained uniquely violent antipathies (Stafford 57).

The federation, situated in the west-central part of the Balkan Peninsula, consisted of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia and Slovenia. During his reign over Communist Yugoslavia from 1945 until 1980, President Josip Broz Tito managed to contain the ethnic strife between the main ethnic groups. The Yugoslav Constitution ensured that no specific group could dominate the state (Hippel 127). Tito's efforts to set a structure that would, in the future, hold the country together did not succeed, however, because Yugoslavia was being pushed apart by a set of heterogeneous pressures. After his death, the country was in fact taken over by a group of nationalist irredentist politicians who wanted to create, out of the Yugoslav federation, independent states for the ethnic groups they led. The collective Presidency, set up by the 1974 constitution, was clearly not working (Herspring 99). The Serbs had, until then, dominated the Yugoslav federation. They favoured a highly centralised political system run exclusively from Belgrade to have the biggest say in the process of decision-making. Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, who came to power in 1987, in turn, wanted to maintain Serbian dominance over Yugoslavia. In his 1987 nationalistic speech in Kosovo, he promised his fellow

Serbs that they would never be dominated by the overwhelming majority of Albanians in Kosovo. Realizing that dominating all of Yugoslavia was impossible, he wanted to unite the ten million Serbs in one single state (Catley and Mosler 108).

Because the distribution of ethnic groups on the ground did in no way correspond to the internal boundaries of former Yugoslavia, a series of wars broke out to redraw boundaries separating the newly created national states. Afraid of being swallowed by the aggressive Serb nationalist movement, Slovenia and Croatia were the first to declare independence in June 1991 (Hippel 130). Montenegro federated with Serbia and created the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Hass 38). When Bosnia-Herzegovina formally declared independence in March 1992, the most serious of the Yugoslav crises began. Bosnia-Herzegovina was by far the most ethnically mixed of all the republics of former Yugoslavia with 43.7 percent Muslims, 31.4 percent Serbs and 17.3 percent Croats, according to the 1991 census. A quarter of the population were intermarried and a secular pluralistic culture flourished in urban areas. Religion was the major difference between the diverse ethnic groups as the Croats were Catholic and the Serbs Orthodox (Kaldor 34).

For nearly a thousand years, these three ethnic groups had contended for supremacy. The mostly Muslim Bosnians were supported by their coreligionists; the mostly catholic Croats were supported by Germany while the mostly Orthodox Serbs were backed by their fellow Slavs in Russia. Bosnians and Croats made efforts through an easy coalition to form a government in Bosnia in 1991 and 1992; the Serbs, however, began fighting in order to join their part of Bosnia to Serbia (Schulzinger 375). Bosnian Serbs and Croats, respectively backed by Serbia and Croatia, had one common political goal and that was ethnic cleansing—the systematic slaughter or deportation of Muslims. Ethnic cleansing was one major characteristic of East European nationalism in the twentieth century. It involved removing by force and intimidation all Muslim

Bosnians in order to create ethnically homogenous territories that would then become part of Serbia and Croatia. The Bosnian government, however, controlled by the Bosnian Muslims wanted to maintain the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina where they were a majority (Kaldor 34). Bosnia had taken this fateful decision months after Germany and then the European Community officially recognized Croatia and Slovenia because it had no other choice. The official irredentist declarations made by Croatians and Slovenians meant that the Muslim minority of what remained of former Yugoslavia would certainly be oppressed by Serbia. It was a real dilemma: declaring independence meant bringing on civil war, while not doing so would mean ethnic cleansing and expulsion of all Muslims by Serbs. International recognition of the new state, including the USA, did not occur until April 1992. War had already started less than a month earlier (Hass 38).

Bosnian Muslims, the largest ethnic group in Bosnia-Herzegovina, were caught in the cross fire between Serbs and Croats. The Serbs, having obtained most of the former Yugoslavian army's weapons, were much better armed than the Bosnians and started evicting all non-Serbs (mostly Muslims) from their homes in both cities and countryside. Hundreds of thousands of civilian Bosnian Muslims fled and tens of thousands died in a ruthless Serb ethnic-cleansing campaign. The capital of Bosnia, Sarajevo, once a magnificent city, was entirely destroyed by the Serbian troops surrounding it. From eyewitnesses and television pictures, the world was following the 1992 daily ethnic brutality, eviction, rapes and murders of innocent Muslim Bosnians (Schulzinger 375).

After months of bloody fighting and the particularly brutal artillery assault on Sarajevo, Serbs (31 percent of Bosnia's population) controlled 65 percent of the territory, and Croats (17 percent of the population) held about 30 percent. That left the Muslim population (44 percent of the total) with only 5 percent of the territory. Some well-informed observers feared that the upshot of the war would be to divide Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia, leaving the Bosnian Muslims

without a state. Worse, it was not entirely clear who was making what to whom. The Yugoslav army made a pretence of neutrality, but it was widely reported that the army was supplying Serbian guerrillas with arms and ammunition (Magstadt 185).

The US government had initially no intention to intervene in the Yugoslav civil war. The Bush administration, no longer concerned with containing communism in Eastern Europe, wanting to avoid offending the Russian government backing the Serbs, and afraid of being entangled with a Vietnam-like quagmire, opted for relegating the management of the crisis to the Europeans, who seemingly had more leverage. France and Germany encouraged US distancing and saw the crisis as an opportunity to test the resolve of the European Community in handling a regional conflict. It was now the turn of the other world major players. (Catley and Mosler 109).

Consequently, the armed conflicts that the implosion of Yugoslavia engendered were shockingly violent and the Europeans were unable to coherently manage the Balkan crisis. Although both the Security Council and the Secretary General of the United Nations had formerly backed the option of a European leadership of the crisis, the UN was gradually forced to intervene as a result of the European failure to handle the crisis. Europe had neither the experience nor the manpower necessary to broker and maintain a cease-fire (Hippel 133-4). As for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), initially created for a completely different purpose, it was rather accustomed to the containment of Soviet Communism and, tacitly, the prevention of a German military resurrection, which it managed to accomplish. Despite the fall of the Soviet Union, it was out of question for the Clinton administration to raise doubts about NATO's relevance especially after the reunification of Germany and the need to boost the process of reform in Eastern Europe's emerging democracies. Instead, Washington was looking for ways to extend it. NATO enlargement became a priority in the 1990's. At the end of the decade, the Check Republic,

Hungary and Poland were all admitted by NATO. With the Balkan violent eruption of ethnic rivalries, the question about NATO's purpose became more enigmatic. Would NATO in the future remain confined solely to the territory of its member states, or, would it rather become also involved in out-of-area wars? (Magstadt 195) NATO's reinvention obviously implied more than merely adding new members; it now needed a new purpose.

In fact, NATO became an important vehicle for the USA to enhance both the extent and the depth of European openness. Within the larger framework of globalisation, European integration was a top priority for Washington because of the effect it had on America's strategic interests. The Clinton administration was devoted to maintaining America's credibility to remain Europe's leading power. NATO needed, for its reinvention, a new purpose, one that would ideally be based on a wider definition of security and a more practical orientation. The purpose allotted to the alliance by President Clinton was responding to "creeping instability" (qtd in Bacevich, *American Empire* 103) with its political as well military threats. This creeping instability necessitated new capabilities, reforms in the structure and training of its units to meet a wider range of contingencies including peace enforcement, peacekeeping and humanitarian relief. It also meant that NATO be disposed to risk out of area, exercising its influence, whenever necessary, beyond its traditional territorial limits. Yet reinventing NATO did in no way mean that Washington was willing to give up on its leading role in the alliance, as it never included such chief notions as assigning the post of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to a European. A US officer had always been and would always remain NATO's top-ranking military officer. (Bacevich, *American Empire* 102-3) NATO needed hence to formulate a new strategic concept commensurate with these new requirements and the Yugoslav crisis seemed to be a perfect opportunity for that.

In the meanwhile, what was happening in the Balkans was a kind of problem the organization has never dealt with before. None of the member states wanted to get involved in a casualty-producing conflict, taking place on an extremely difficult terrain and with no clear strategic objectives. Nonetheless, the hazard of the ethnic conflict spreading wider, the repercussions of the civil war on their own countries including refugees escaping persecution and ethnic cleansing were too serious to be ignored. The option of inactivity for NATO would soon recede (Catley and Mosler 109).

The European Community and later on the United Nations started thus exerting pressure on Serbia with the use of sanctions. A freeze on aid and a complete arms embargo were imposed. The Bush administration endorsed the UN-backed embargo on arms delivery to the conflicting parties. The Serbs, who had most of the tanks and weapons of the former Soviet army, suffered far less from the embargo, however, than the legitimate Muslim-led government in Bosnia. (Schulzinger 376).The human disasters resulting from genocides and ethnic cleansing shocked the international conscience and led to bigger pressure to put an end to human rights abuses and atrocities committed in the region. The UN did, at the beginning, deplore those abuses, but did not see them as a sufficient cause to take military actions. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was deployed in Bosnia, not to protect civilians directly, but to create proper conditions of security and peace needed for the conciliation of an overall settlement of the Yugoslav crisis; in other words to protect UN civilian relief operations. What was actually needed in such a case was adding an armed element to humanitarian aid so as to protect threatened civilians (Shaw 18).

Nevertheless, the United Nations, the United States and the European Community were all reluctant to send soldiers to make peace in Bosnia. As for the Clinton administration, despite the

promises made during the 1992 electoral campaign to intervene in the Balkans, once in office, President Clinton retracted and followed a foreign policy in the area much similar to his predecessor. He, too, was afraid that the deployment of US troops to the Balkans would be much more difficult than their retreat because the ancient deep hatred of the ethnic strife in former Yugoslavia made it seemingly impossible for any power to resolve (Schulzinger 376). Notwithstanding continuing Serbian atrocities against Muslim Bosnians and appeals for US intervention by Democratic liberals, the administration favoured deferring to the UN's and the EC's passive policies. (Hanson 135)

There was lack of clarity and consensus about the nature of the conflict and *ipso facto* the effectiveness of a potential US or any other external intervention in the civil war and the nature of US interests in the region. Within the overall search for grand strategy, the way the conflict and US interests were perceived determined the stance preferred. Some regarded Bosnia as a humanitarian tragedy with no significant strategic interests to the USA and consequently opposed military intervention. Others saw it in America's own interest to forcefully oppose external aggression so as to avoid the spread of violence elsewhere in Europe and setting a poor precedent in the post-Cold War world and, accordingly, favoured indirect or even direct military involvement to stop the Serb aggression. There was likewise a disagreement over whether the conflict in Bosnia was an internal civil war, given its ethnic character and the newness of the separation, or whether it was a traditional type of inter-state conflict, given the international recognition of the independence of Bosnia Herzegovina (Hass 39).

President Clinton's Secretary of State Warren Christopher cast all the doubts away declaring that the US was not prepared to deploy troops against the Serbs. Diplomacy was thus the favoured foreign policy tool and a support of the UN embargo was maintained. The violence in

Bosnia was not perceived as a direct threat to American security (Offner 35). The American military establishment was adamantly against an armed intervention, as no clear objective that would justify the use of massive force existed. Ever since the Weinberger/Powel Doctrine has become the guiding principle of US military interventions abroad, any use of force had to be massive enough as to be decisive. The complexity of the ethnic strife allowed for no visible exit strategy. Even the hawks, who had always favoured vigorous action, were now only arguing for limited measures; public support for ground force intervention was impossible to obtain. Public opinion polls indicated a 60 to 70 per cent opposition to the use of force (Hyland 33).

There were though, outside the Clinton administration, calls by human rights advocates for greater US involvement in the Balkans. Within the administration, Madeleine Albright, then US representative to the UN, was the only one who constantly recommended more efforts on the part of Washington to stop the Civil War in Bosnia. Albright believed that the US should act as a beacon of freedom and hope to all people resisting despotism and called for the use of force to attain multilateral foreign policy objectives. From the beginning, she urged the administration to fulfil Clinton's 1992 campaign promise to intervene to stop violence in the former Yugoslavia. (Schulzinger 344). She blamed Powell, at the outset of the Clinton administration, for his reluctance to make proper use of American military prowess to end the crises besetting the Balkans and other various hot spots in the Horn of Africa and the Caribbean. "What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about," she asked Colin Powell, "if we can't use it?" (qtd. in Powell 576)

Madeleine Albright made it clear that her willingness to use American military power to set things right had nothing to do with bellicosity. She was devoted to peace, not to war, but was openly willing to capitalise on America's striking military power and use it to coerce whenever

necessary. She clearly distinguished between using force and making war. America might be impelled to use force for the sake of peace and justice, but not to make war on others. Albright's distinction between using military force and waging war became central to American foreign policy in the Age of globalisation. War has proven too costly to America as it typically implies bloodshed, suffering, loss and national sacrifice. War, as Vietnam had demonstrated, involves unexpected and unintended consequences. Albright's perception of the utility of force was based on a careful and selective use of force against preferably inanimate objects to avoid bloodshed. Targeting opponents with little or no capacity to retaliate, from afar, while capitalising on advanced technology held the promise of highly minimising uncertainty and, consequently, hazards to US troops (Bacevich, *American Empire* 47-9). In such a way, the use of force would reduce costs and increase utility. Albright's distinction between using force and making war together with the specificities of the 1990's and the aggravating Balkan crisis gradually eased into superannuation the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine.

With the looming humanitarian disaster in Bosnia and the increasing reports of Serb atrocity, Washington was slowly dragged into involvement. In May 1993, Secretary of State Warren Christopher proposed a selective lifting of the embargo on arms so as to allow the Bosnians to obtain weapons and defend themselves. In the meanwhile, the US and its NATO allies would launch air strikes against the Serbs to destroy their deadly heavy weapons (Hass 39). US military involvement in Bosnia would be limited to air strikes only because President Clinton was not inclined to challenge a Pentagon obstinately opposing placing US troops on harm's way. (Bacevich, *American Empire* 92) The Lift and Strike Operation was meant to coerce the Serbs into concluding their ethnic cleansing and accepting a cease-fire. Yet the proposition faced little European support, as they feared that would result in Serbian retaliation against their forces on the

ground (no US troops participated in UNPROFOR) and consequently hinder the few relief supplies destined to the Bosnian population (Hass 39). In his memoires, Secretary of State Warren Christopher acknowledges that he had been given instructions to take "a conciliatory approach" with the allies proposing Lift and Strike and clearly "asking for their support." (364) Consequently, Washington reacted to the European rejection of the Lift and Strike with retreat; it had no intention to act alone. Consistent with the administration's foreign policy philosophy, it would intervene only if the safety and comfort of European assistance was assured (Hyland 38).

For nearly two years, neither the US nor NATO undertook substantial military actions. Launching strategic air attacks on Serbia to coerce or to punish and arming the Bosnian Muslims were both ruled out. It was clear that without the threat of actual use of force, diplomacy alone would fail to stop the bloodshed. Actually, while President Clinton was trying to buy time, the crisis in Bosnia was exasperating too rapidly. Many towns were completely cut off, running out of food and other supplies and quickly succumbing to the grisly brutality of the incessant fighting. The flow of refugees escaping Bosnia was increasing, the death toll growing and reports of humanitarian atrocities piling up. In Great Britain, Margaret Thatcher was denouncing the West's hesitation, comparing the massacres in Bosnia to the holocaust. Twelve US State Department officers were pressing for firm military action. In a leaked memorandum from Ambassador Albright to President Clinton, she advocated the use of air power to coerce the Serbs into recession (Hyland 35-6).

In the aftermath of a Serbian mortar assault on a market place in Sarajevo in February 1994, resulting in sixty-eight deaths, President Clinton decided to act. Four distinct interests were cited to justify the new tack: preserving NATO's integrity, preventing a broader European war, curtailing the flow of refugees, and ceasing the slaughter of innocent Bosnians and the

strangulation of Sarajevo. Endorsed by the United Nations and NATO, an exclusion zone extending twenty kilometres from the centre of Sarajevo was created. No mortars or heavy artillery would be permitted in the zone. A Serb violation of the no-fly zone led NATO to use air power to destroy four Bosnian Serb warplanes as part of Operation Deny Flight (Hass 41). The 100,000 sorties by combat aircraft meant to enforce the no-fly-zone over Bosnia had minimal practical effect as the Serb government was still violating UN directives. NATO occasional small-scale air strikes against Serbian targets likewise had short-lived limited dissuading effects (Bacevich, *American Empire* 163-4).

At the same time both the USA and Russia undertook diplomatic initiatives. A federation of Bosnian Croats and Muslims together with the recognition of ethnic partition and most of Serbian military gains were fostered. By late March 1994, Serbian forces attacked Gorazde, one of six Bosnian cities designated as safe areas by the UNSC Resolution 824, and consisting of 65,000 mostly Muslim inhabitants. Amidst powerful public criticism for its initial decision to publically rule out the use of military force to protect the city and television images of the atrocities committed by the Serbs, the Clinton administration, in accordance with NATO and the United Nations, launched two limited air strikes, which failed to stop the Serbian aggression. Only three weeks after the Serbian siege of Gorazde started did NATO at US request issue an ultimatum for the Serbs to cease their assaults, retreat from Gorazde and stop interfering with UN relief efforts (Hass 43).

After the cease-fire, France, Britain, Germany and Russia made another peace plan in July 1994. In this plan, Bosnia was divided in two mini ethnic states within a unitary state: the Croat Bosnian Federation would have 51 percent of the territory and the Bosnian Serbs the remaining 49 percent. Each unit would be relatively free to conduct its own affairs, but with the option of

eventual secession accepted. The Bosnian Serbs rejected the plan. A Cessation of Hostilities Agreement was then signed by the warring parties only to be again violated. No peace plan could work and settle the hostilities in former Yugoslavia for the sole reason that their implementation was never properly enforced (Hippel 147). Equally important was the fact that the use of power as an expression of humanitarianism was used to enforce settlements that prioritised political compromise at the expense of the rights of the victims (Shaw 20).

In the USA, the dragging civil war in Bosnia has become a symbol of President Clinton's failed foreign policy. After having opted for NATO unity over the Bosnian crisis as a priority, several new factors were changing the US course of action and allowing for a peace settlement to be feasible. First, the Clinton administration secretly allowed the Croats to import Iranian weapons. Second, the Congress passed a law prohibiting the US Navy from enforcing the UN arms embargo. Third, the Croatian forces, trained by the USA and better equipped, started defeating the Serbian troops; by early August 1995, they managed to recover most of Croatian territory lost to the Serbs in the war. Fourth, horrific slaughters were perpetuated by the Serbs in a counteroffensive against UN outposts around Srebrenica and Zepa. The last factor was the catalyst for a total shift in President Clinton's attitude and policy towards Bosnia (Hyland 40).

The ethnic cleansing that was taking place in Bosnia, and American reluctance to effectively intervene to end the stalemate had actually been undermining the cohesion of NATO and the credibility of US power and leadership in Europe. UN efforts to manage the crisis have been dramatically useless. Even after UNPROFOR was mandated with bigger enforcement powers in August 1995, with a mix of peacekeeping and enforcement powers, the crisis could not be solved as the conflicting parties refused to consent and cooperate. Lack of adequate resources prevented the foreign personnel on the ground from accomplishing their duties, which meant that even

delivery of humanitarian aid and securing strategic centres failed. Capital and manpower provided for the UN operation in Bosnia could not keep the pace with the mounting number of UNSC resolutions (eighty-three resolutions with regard to former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1995). While the UNSC was calling the operation on the ground for a direct decisive response to any misdeed, the deployed force was overwhelmed by these demands because of lack of resources, small size, and the unclear rules of engagement (Hippel 137).

Sanctions, a muddled peacekeeping operation, US reluctance to deploy its troops, the media and the flow of refugees all served to ensnare the international community. President Clinton ultimately realised that setting deference to the Europeans as a strategic rationale for American policy led to failure. A circulating, widely quoted comment by the French President Jacques Chirac, after his visit to Washington in June that the post of the free world's leader was "vacant" was particularly irritating to the American president. In addition, Bosnia had to be settled before the 1996 electoral campaign (Hyland 40). Consequently, the Clinton administration came up with a new and coherent peace plan based on American leadership to solve the crisis. The plan included a three-way recognition among Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia, the lifting of economic sanctions guaranteed by a cease-fire and a territorial settlement based on the earlier plan of a 51/49 percent division. There was a condition to this American active diplomatic move, however. No US ground troops would be involved in the fighting (Holbrooke 74).

As National Security Adviser Anthony Lake started his mission to Europe, American public attitude towards the Balkan crisis was changing. Resistance to military involvement was weakening especially after the Serbs killed thirty-seven shoppers in Sarajevo on August 28, 1995. This immediately ignited sustained NATO air strikes on military targets, with UN backing, comprising for the first time assaults by American cruise missiles against a Serb base (Holbrooke

92-3). Operation Deliberate Force was a powerful NATO bombing campaign completely different from the usual pinpricks used to enforce UN directives. The aim was to coerce the Serbs into accepting negotiations to end the civil war in Bosnia. The operation consisted of mostly American 290 aircraft, over 3,500 sorties carrying 1,026 pieces of weaponry against 84 targets. The campaign, and the advances made by the Croats on the ground did create the conditions for the peace talks to take place (Bacevich, *American Empire* 164). The military intervention, its scope and its manner, the effect it would have on the crisis were all major components of a momentous test of the legitimacy of American leadership in Europe. The outcome of the test would determine America's position not only in the continent, but in the world as a whole.

Ultimately, conditions were ripe for a peace settlement. After negotiations in Dayton, Ohio, Bosnia would be partitioned, but that was the only way to end a war that had been extremely harmful to the Bosnian people. Three years of bloody war made it impossible to maintain the territorial unity of Bosnia-Herzegovina. A cease-fire went into effect on October 5. NATO and the USA deployed a force of fifty to sixty thousand troops including around twenty thousand American soldiers to observe an uneasy truce in a troubled land (Hyland 42).

Sending troops to Bosnia proved a difficult decision to take in front of a sceptical congress as President Clinton needed to first clearly identify their specific mission in Bosnia and then guarantee a fixed deadline, an exit strategy. Faithful to a now firmly established political tradition in the USA, the president declared he did not need congressional authority to send troops. Yet, to obtain support, he also made it clear that the mission was "clear and limited" (qtd. in Hyland 42) and that the deployment of US troops would be limited to one year. Congress approved the deployment of the troops. Once safely re-elected, however, President Clinton switched tactics, acknowledged his error in setting previous deadlines and declared that, given the dragging

stalemate in Bosnia, American forces would indeed remain without a deadline for their withdrawal. They were now more deeply drawn into domestic Bosnian politics and increasingly operating as political police (Hyland 42-3).

The dragging conflict and the atrocious ethnic cleansing in Bosnia called into question the cohesion of NATO and the credibility of American might. Inaction was promising an irrevocable erosion of both and led President Clinton, who had in 1993 flinched from deploying military force in Bosnia, to thoroughly change attitude, and embrace the use of coercive diplomacy together with an open-ended military occupation of Bosnia. The aim was probably more a pre-emption of threats to NATO utility and American prestige than a response to claims of conscience to stop the genocide in Bosnia. (Shoup and Burg 412) Yet, the Bosnian crisis did actually raise important questions about not only NATO's viability, but its very relevance as well. The disarray with which it dealt with the Bosnian civil war revealed serious cracks in the alliance's very foundations (Magstadt 196).

The Dayton settlement in Bosnia and the way in which the war concluded raised the very serious question of whether – or how long – conflict in the neighbourhood of the former Yugoslavia could be contained. It also left unresolved the original conflict in Kosovo, a province ruled by Milosevic's Serbia to the exclusion of its ninety percent Albanians (called Kosovars) majority population. These Kosovars had been undertaking a movement of peaceful civil resistance throughout the 1990's. Having failed to win concessions from Serbia or significant backing from the West led them to form the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), aiming at defending Albanians and demanding independence. After Dayton, KLA embarked on a campaign of violence against Serbian state institutions. By 1998, there was bloody warfare between KLA fighters and Serbian forces, which responded with a brutal counterinsurgency campaign, systematically driving

Kosovars out of Kosovo into neighbouring states and burning villages suspected of hiding KLA fighters (Magstadt 196). Over the next year, 2,000 Albanians were killed and tens of thousands made homeless (Shaw 20).

The specificities of the crisis in Kosovo were many and made it, contrary to what Europeans and Americans immediately speculated, different from the war in Bosnia. First, Serbs in Kosovo were a tiny minority. Second, in Kosovo Serbs and Albanians were distinctly different ethnic groups, not speaking the same language as Bosnians did. Third, the fighting in Kosovo threatened to leak into neighbouring Macedonia and Albania. Fourth, Milosevic, who was willing to sell out his own allies in Bosnia, was reputed as virulently nationalistic in Kosovo, depriving the province of its autonomous state. Finally, legitimate authorities in Bosnia had welcomed foreign intervention, while the Serbian military in Kosovo would certainly resist. In other words, outside intervention would not have to attempt to make or keep peace, but rather to straightforwardly make war (Hyland 44-5). This obviously implied that the United States would have to, not only avoid the errors of judgement and decisions made in Bosnia, but more importantly, take into consideration the specificities of this Balkan crisis so as to understand and hence maximise the utility of its military force to bring an end to the conflict.

On February 23, 1998, US special envoy to the Balkans Robert Gelbard denounced KLA fighters as terrorists. For the USA and NATO, Serbia was clearly classified as a rogue state, Kosovo, a failed region and nationalism as an evil hindrance in the face of globalisation. Yet there had basically been confused views about Slobodan Milosevic in the West as he was initially regarded as the best man in the region to do business with. That is so because he was seemingly an economic liberal that had enough authority to implement the economic reform required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Accordingly, it was not really clear what made one specific

nationalism more sympathetic to the USA and NATO than another. Gelbard's declaration that "KLA is without any question a terrorist group" and that the USA "condemns very strongly terrorist activities in Kosovo" (qtd. in Fouskas 45) actually amounted to a green light to Belgrade to carry on the ethnic cleansing of Kosovars (Fouskas 44-5).

The USA would later on try to mediate with Milosevic, seeking a peaceful resolution and, when this failed, attempted to force the parties to a settlement at Rambouillet, near Paris, in early 1999. Some US officials believed in a carrot-and-stick approach: using the threat of bombing to bring Milosevic to the negotiating table. The Serbian regime was presented with an ultimatum, which called for a withdrawal of Serbian security forces from Kosovo to replace them with a NATO force. Yet the threat failed and Milosevic resisted this settlement, which led the USA to command a NATO air bombing campaign in March 1999, code-named Operation Allied Force (Clark 117, 128, 171). US military forces played the leading role in a nineteen-member coalition under the command of General Wesley Clark, the supreme allied commander Europe (SAUCEUR). Many of these members displayed ambivalence and reservations as to the use of force in Kosovo, which led to the adoption of a gradualist bombing strategy (Carr Chapter 8). The raids were meant to demonstrate the alliance's determination, rather than force Serbia to stop its ethnic cleansing of Albanians and relinquish its control of Kosovo. The quantities of ammunitions used and the number of raids undertaken manifested no intention of imposing victory, as they were much smaller than what was used in the opening days of the Gulf War. Air power alone could obviously not affect the situation on the ground. On the contrary, NATO's bombing from high altitudes caused all the harm to civilians, but, again, President Clinton publically declared that he ruled out the option of using ground forces in Kosovo. The message that Milosevic obtained from such an announcement was that NATO was far from being serious in attempting to halt the Serbian

forces. Consequently, he responded with a further campaign of terror killing about 10,000 Albanians and driving the majority of the 2 million Kosovar population from their homes in Kosovo (Shaw 21).

The cracks in NATO became highly perceptible again as a horrific replay of the carnages in Bosnia was taking place in Kosovo. Milosevic's ethnic cleansing of Albanians, the atrocities inflicted on innocent defenceless civilians required an immediate response from the international community. The USA, supposedly the mightiest power in the post-Cold war world, having allegedly declared itself the defender of human rights and world stability, was once again forced to decide to act or not to act. President Clinton had to assume the burden of political and moral responsibility required from the Number One leader of the only remaining superpower. The fact that the American President failed from demonstrating his determination as commander in chief of the world's leading military power to use as much firmness as essential, caused Milosevic to speed up the massacres against the Kosovars. President Clinton was merely reacting to Milosevic actions. The only choice now NATO was left up with was to intensify the bombing and keep hitting Serbia, not sparing Belgrade, so hard in order to force Milosevic to withdraw his troops (Magstadt 196).

The USA and NATO were hence forced to escalate their air strikes in response to Milosevic's escalation of the ethnic cleansing of Albanians until they found themselves driven into an increasingly serious war fought exclusively from the air. Out of 36,000 sorties, 1,200 were strike raids. Around 5,000 conventional bombs and 20,000 smart bombs were released. Yet this was done against a Yugoslav army that had been for fifty years toughly trained to manage to endure any superior army. A massive underground network had been built, including barracks, stores, and airports. Great emphasis had been placed on developing tactics which involved erecting decoys,

conserving air defences, hiding tanks and artillery, and by all possible manners avoiding troop concentrations (Kaldor 140-1). Consequently, the use of strategic air power to stop the Serbian ethnic cleansing campaign proved highly problematic. The Yugoslav military machine was hardly damaged as Serb troops used concealment, cover and deception to offset the power of US precision weapons. Serbian tanks and infantry had endured only minimal damage after many weeks of heavy bobbing, which led NATO forces, frustrated by the lack of progress, to increasingly target Serbian economic and industrial infrastructure (Biddle 186-7).

Those demonstrative air raids had boomeranged dreadfully because of wide media coverage of the suffering of refugees especially in camps in both Macedonia and Albania. The only way for NATO to avoid complete humiliation was escalation, but neither European leaders, nor President Clinton would deploy ground forces, the only effective way out of the stalemate (Shaw 21). Instead, NATO continued to fly at 15,000 feet, which prevented pilots from seeing what was happening on the ground and made them exclusively dependent on intelligence from various, often poorly coordinated, sources (Kaldor 141). At the same time, the escalation, now comprising a deeper and larger use of air power through a bigger number of bombs and raids and a larger scale of targets including questionable areas, came to put in peril civilian security (Shaw 22). Within four weeks, fifty-nine bridges, nine major airports, eighty percent of Serbia's oil-production factories and seventy percent of its electricity grid had been destroyed. Many other civilian targets like power stations and roads were hit. As the air strikes were uncomfortably dragging, repeated mistakes were constantly made. The bombing of the Chinese Embassy, of refugees inside Kosovo, accidental massacres of other refugees in a convoy and of ten passengers on a train were quite embarrassing to NATO (Shaw 22). A hundred other civilians were massacred in an assault on Serb positions south of Kosovo. In the course of the war, cluster bombs slayed

between ninety and a hundred and fifty civilians in so-called collateral damage. Three cruise missiles were used to blow the Belgrade headquarters of Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) up. The assault resulted in the death of sixteen journalists and electricians (Carr Chapter 8). Many historic sites were destroyed as well (Kaldor 141). The humanitarian intervention in Kosovo was killing the very innocent civilians it was initially meant to protect.

The use of air bombing to end the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo had largely counterproductive political consequences. Despite NATO claims that there is a clear distinction between accidental and deliberate killing, the difference was in no way obvious to the victims of the assaults. It is hardly possible in such situations to determine whether the killing of innocent civilians is collateral damage or rather massacre (Kaldor 142). In an intervention that was largely humanitarian – aiming mainly at restoring the refugees – the amount of civilian bloodshed was appalling. Collateral damage is one of the relatively legitimate consequences of war when it is genuine collateral damage; nevertheless, in Kosovo, the alliance was in no way willing to risk the lives of the bombers to Serbian anti-aircraft fire. NATO decided to risk civilian lives through high-altitude targeting miscalculations for the sake of keeping its aircrews safe. The complete success of the strategy was astounding as not a single member of the NATO military forces died by enemy fire. Yet, this very success sharply underlined both the moral and the political questionability of high altitude strikes (Shaw 22). The cost of the so-called military success was extremely high: between 5,000 and 10,000 Serbian soldiers and some 500 civilians were killed, while 6,000 were wounded. In Kosovo, 4,300 bodies of Kosovar civilians were exhumed by 2001 (Carr Chapter 8).

Likewise, those who experienced the effects of the bombing belied the American and European leaders' insistence that the bombing was targeting the regime and not the Serbs. A Serbian dissident journalist, living in Belgrade, vividly narrates in her wartime diaries the terror

that all civilians in the city, including herself, her family and neighbours endured as they daily came face to face with death as a result of successive bombings, water and food shortages and blackouts (Tesanovic). Instead of bringing Milosevic to his knees, the strikes did rather mobilise Serbian national sentiment and make of the dictator a national hero. In Macedonia and Montenegro, domestic tensions were accentuated by both NATO strikes and the influx of refugees so much that the risk was increasingly rising of the spread of violence in the area. Strategic Bombing did also raise international doubts about the real motive of the intervention in Kosovo. The war for human rights in the Balkans was in many quarters perceived as nothing more than a concealed way for the continuing pursuit of traditional Western imperial interests in the region (Kaldor 142).

NATO forces undoubtedly prevailed, but by the time the Milosevic government was finally defeated, innocent lives had been taken away and over a million Kosovars (about three-fifths of the Albanian population) had been deported. Those who survived the war returned to wrecked villages and homes and prepared for self-government in an atmosphere where peace had to be guaranteed by the presence of 50,000 NATO and UN troops, including more than 5,000 American troops. NATO and the USA were once more committed to an open-ended project of nation building. Like in Bosnia, the European effective contribution to the war effort had been minimal as American naval and air forces made up most of the 6,000 bombing operations undertaken under the auspices of NATO (Magstadt 197). A NATO occupation thus succeeded the Kosovo war, as had been the case with the more limited bombing campaign in Bosnia. The division of labour was now different from that of the war itself: whereas Washington provided most of the bombers, many UN states including European ones provided most of the longer-term troops on the ground in the liberated area (Shaw 23).

Peace had to be imposed in Kosovo via a UN interim administration and NATO troops serving as a kind of police force. The UN-NATO regime disarmed KLA and promised to protect the 5 percent Serbian minority in Kosovo. The United Nations proved itself again poorly equipped to govern. Unfamiliar with local customs and languages and met with hostility from outraged Kosovars, UN administrators and NATO forces could do little to improve the situation in the area. The absence of local police, courts, and even laws to deal with ordinary crime led to a dangerous legal and institutional vacuum. Serbs were facing high levels of economic hardships and shortages as a direct result of the economic sanctions that had been imposed on Serbia as well as the severe damage on infrastructure and strategic industries because of NATO bombings. In 2000, public demonstrations against Milosevic rose and turned him out of office. Mass demonstrations forced him to resign before he was charged with abuse of power and corruption and ultimately extradited to The Hague Tribunal to be tried for the war crimes he committed (Magstadt 198-9).

Contrary to expectations and presumptions that Europe would, in the aftermath of the Cold War, be less dependent on the USA for its security, the Balkan crises demonstrated that, in the first decade after the Cold War, US domination of NATO became all the greater. US intervention in Kosovo demonstrated the indispensable leading role of the USA of NATO and the amount of European security dependence on American military might and American leadership. A role that Washington was seemingly not intent on giving up on. In the words of German foreign minister Joschka Fisher: “The Kosovo war was mainly an experience of Europe’s own insufficiency and weakness. We as Europeans never could have coped with the Balkan wars that were caused by Milosevic without the help of the United States. The sad truth is that Kosovo showed Europe is still not able to solve its own problems.” (qtd. in Drozdiak)

In the meanwhile, affirming the dominant position of the USA in an integrated, open and unified Europe was a policy priority for Washington, much more important than even the atrocities in Kosovo. Europe was a priority in America's strategy of openness. Under this perspective, US military interventions in the Balkans were an inevitable part of doing business. Two major matters counted most within the strategy of openness, America's influence and America's business. For many US policy makers then, the tangible remuneration lay in the way in which, between 1994 and 1998, American investment in Europe amplified sevenfold and trade between the European Community and the United States similarly increased substantially, to $450 billion per year (Bacevich, *American Empire* 104-5)

The Kosovo War started in March and was over by June 1999, a brief, but troubled war. The amazing success of precision bombing in the Gulf War of 1991 had driven the air force to put more emphasis upon accuracy capability in the shaping of its future. A bombing force of unparalleled precision had been developed by the service before the end of the decade. Although Washington had no real strategic stake in Kosovo, the very existence of such an amazing air power tool must be one important reason why the Clinton administration decided to at last interfere in the area. Because Precision bombing would minimalize the hazard to US soldiers, the Clinton administration assumed that potential domestic opposition to the war would certainly be greatly minimized. In reality, however, air power did in no way halt Milosevic's ethnic cleansing, but did rather accelerate it. The Serbian leader did finally capitulate, which enabled air power advocates to claim that strategic bombing from high altitude had won a war on its own. The real reasons for Milosevic capitulation remain a source of speculation, while the course of the little Kosovo war strongly suggests that drawing a straight line from air bombing to easy victory would be utterly

injudicious. It rather raises serious and difficult questions about how effective the use of coercive force from high altitude is (Biddle 186-7).

President Clinton's two terms did produce an unparalleled level of political activism. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has made use of its military power abroad approximately four dozen times, as opposed to no more than 16 during the entire Cold War era. Kosovo was actually the culmination of a process that had started with victory in the Persian Gulf War in 1991. It highlighted and fostered expectations of the utility of military power, now endowed with high-tech innovations (Bacevich *American Empire* 143). This did now promise to render warfare an immaculate undertaking that not only allows the United States to intervene almost everywhere in the world with minimum, if not zero, casualties, but also to guarantee public support for a coercive diplomacy that does in no way require full domestic mobilisation for the war effort. It was a return to the small war tradition that had since the American Independence, served the interests of the empire without arousing the sensitivities of the republic. It goes without saying though that the perception of a clean immaculate warfare always comes into friction with the actual realities of the battlefield, often, if not always, misunderstood and poorly considered before the decision to intervene is made. This increases the unpredictability of actual warfare and causes Clausewitzean fog of war to become even thicker.

1.3 The American Humanitarian War: A Double Oxymoron

Humanitarian interventions are supposed to be revolving around the two concepts of humanitarianism and just war. In other words, for such an intervention to be legitimate, it must be exclusively for human and just considerations. The persisting question, though, is whether such

legitimacy should be gauged on the basis of the motives or of the outcomes of the intervention. While the real motivation behind interventions is often elusive, the outcome remains the only measure of the success or failure –and hence of the legitimacy – of these military endeavours. It determines whether a state's interference with another state's security and stability is justifiable. In the human intervention doctrine, the defence and protection of human rights is both the motive and the measure.

Nevertheless, the doctrine gradually degenerated into humanitarian war, which refers to, in the words of Adam Roberts, "major uses of armed force in the name of humanitarianism." (429) With the blurring of boundaries between humanitarian intervention and war, it became difficult, if not impossible to now safeguard human rights while literally waging war to allegedly put an end to genocides, ethnic cleansing and human rights abuse. Whatever the real motivation of the military adventure is, the defender definitely becomes the perpetuator. The question now is not only whether to use force in a sovereign country or not, but rather how this same force ought to be used, and the degree of the willingness to be wholeheartedly committed to assume the long-term responsibility of the military intervention. The authentic intention behind the intervention determines both the way it is used and the effectiveness of such a use.

Within this context, the wars in the Balkans were another instance of the new American way of using war to deal with ethnic cleansing, genocide and humanitarian abuses. It was the ultimate display of its tendency to use force while minimizing the risk to its own forces. It showed that war and humanitarian intervention were after all not entirely different kinds of use of military power. As a matter of fact, there was a full spectrum of military practices ranging from the most limited type of peacekeeping or humanitarian action, through more disputed peace-enforcement, to a serious military campaign or war like that in the Gulf. Although 'humanitarian war' is an

oxymoron that should be rejected, it yet reflects the Balkans' position on the previous spectrum, more 'war' than many 'humanitarian' actions, but a less thorough use of military force than the Gulf campaign (Shaw 22-3). It can properly be labelled 'war' rather than 'humanitarian intervention'. A war, even with the most sincere humanitarian intentions, always involves disastrous human tragedies and always has chaotic long-term consequences. This is especially the case if no genuine post-war strategy is judiciously designed and applied to both pacify, reconstruct and gradually attend the local governmental structures in such a way as to safely lead them towards autonomous governance.

The new American way of war used for humanitarian purposes is genuinely a double oxymoron. War per se can in no way be humanitarian and the American way of waging war, with its emphasis on nullifying the risk to America's forces with exclusive reliance on high altitude bombing is in utter, flagrant contradiction with what in essence a humanitarian intervention is. The Balkans represent the culmination of the crisis inherent in the very place military force occupies in the nation's political and military tradition. The crisis inherent in the very gap that keeps widening between the republican perception of war and the actual utility of war to reach national objectives. Not only did this way of war lead to a serious questioning of the utility of force to reach US political objectives when the nation's interest was at stake, but it now led to a more serious questioning of this very utility and of its legitimacy when the nation is seemingly pursuing altruistic visions.

Some critics assert that America, the uncontested leader of NATO, intervened in the Balkans not to stop the ethnic cleansing there, but rather for the sake of its own strategic interests in the area. The new humanitarianism – a term which came to be used to refer to America's 'altruistic' military interventions in the 1990's, is nothing more than a myth and a justification to

cover traditional power considerations. They fervently denounce the double standard of American humanitarian interventions, which are made only when the perpetuator is not an American ally or does not play by America's rules of the game. Concrete examples would be non-intervention against Turkey despite Ankara's violation of human rights against nationalist Kurds in the 1990's for the sole reason that Turkey is a NATO ally. Furthermore, when there is a humanitarian crisis, the international community has one of three options. Either act in such a way to escalate the distress, do nothing or try to mitigate the catastrophe. What NATO opted for was seemingly choose the first option, which makes it typically similar to the Europeans great powers intentions, in the past, to civilise Africa, Asia and Latin America. The trend of new interventionism or what came to be labelled military humanism of the 1990's, has nothing to do with the declared benevolent humanitarian intentions as the crises could eventually have been solved in other ways rather than bombings. (Chomsky 48) The degree of the validity of this argument is debatable. Two ideas are beyond discussion though. 'Military humanism' perfectly describes US humanitarian interventions of the 1990's because of their overall military nature and this oxymoron per se always raises suspicion about its very legitimacy, about the real motives and the inevitable consequences of the interventions, and similarly about the double standard inherent in its adoption.

Military humanism applied by NATO in Kosovo to get Slobodan Milosevic halt the cleansing of ethnic Albanians raised important questions of legitimacy. Threatening the Serbs to use violence in case of non-compliance was a violation of NATO's own statutory principle as a pact of defence and of all prevailing international rules. NATO did in fact attack a sovereign state without any legitimacy provided by the approval of the UNSC. The UN charter did itself fail to address the issue of intra-state violence effectively. The use of force as a tool of coercive diplomacy against Milosevic was illegal for two major reasons: first, because in international law

there is no specific doctrine for the way force ought to be used for humanitarian purposes; second, because the military involvement was not approved by the UNSC[29]. This practice did create a precedent in international relations and the actual conduct of foreign affairs. Even if the principle of violent humanitarian intervention came to gain institutional status, how could humanitarian requirement possibly conform to the very practical operational conduct of military intervention? Assuming that morality became a legal constituent in the conduct of foreign policy, then it would have to accord with the rather complicated operational practicality of that same conduct. Selective solicitation of the principle of humanitarian intervention inevitably drives the risk of double standards and generates great suspicions about Great Power neo-imperialistic intentions. In fact, bombing the Serbs for the ethnic cleansing of Albanians, while not bombing Ankara for the suppression of the Kurds or Moscow for attacking the Chechens undermines the humanitarian dimension of the use by the USA and NATO of force to allegedly alleviate suffering and end crises (Fouskas 46-7).

For NATO and the United States, the Balkan experience is only the first set of serious problems at the core of which is the flawed transformation of the organisation from a military alliance into a political pact. This transformation is thus likely to jeopardise, rather than yield security in the European continent, in the Balkans, and by obvious extension, in the Middle East. In its over-reach, NATO fails to diagnose the fundamental historical and political limits of its expansionist venture. It is worth mentioning that the fluctuations inherent in US policy via NATO put an end to the political myth of using violence to bring justice through. This further demonstrates that in fact power politics and a set of conflicting national and economic interests do

[29] The USA did not take the issue to the UN Security Council for it was certain that Russia and China would have opposed its strategy.

dominate a world that is realist or neo-realist. The cost for that is always colossally human (Fouskas 62).

This been said, ethnic violence clearly constitutes a flagrant breach of the Geneva Conventions[30] and is in no way a legitimate tool of diplomacy. Nevertheless, what does always prevail in the actual conduct of both domestic and foreign policy in modern states is the prevalence of political over ethical concerns. Undeniably, any foreign policy discourse promoting the protection of human rights lacks a sincere moral substance; the Balkan crisis is the best example to demonstrate that. It is clear that NATO and US intervention in the area had some definite security and geopolitical interests in the Balkans, the Black Sea region and Central Asia. Overall, these geopolitical interests had simply to do with the protection of oil and gas pipeline projects and with the eastward expansion of NATO per se. In point of fact, there is seemingly no way to solve the issue of double standards. No hegemonic power could ever substitute one-standard humanitarian principles, justice and international law for its own national and geopolitical interests. Yet, what can possibly be done is decide, for example, which definition to adopt for such important concepts as self-determination (Fouskas 47).

Two definitions of self-determination have had considerable political impact during the previous decades. One originates from the Liberal Wilsonian tradition which dates back to the First World War and which claims that "in a pluralist-democratic system the majority rules democratically and the minority controls, also democratically." The other stems from the leader of the Russian Revolution, Vladimir I. Lenin, who had argued that not only "the ethnic majority has the right to declare self-rule and independence in a given territorial area, but also the ethnic

[30] The Geneva Conventions (1949) and their Additional Protocols form the core of international humanitarian law, which regulates the conduct of armed conflict and seeks to limit its effects. They protect people not taking part in hostilities and those who are no longer doing so.

minority." (Fouskas 48) Each definitions has a specific impact on the legitimacy, the understanding, the perception and the evaluation of the ethnic crises in Yugoslavia and elsewhere in the world. The definition adopted definitely determines the very manner in which the United Nations, NATO and the United States are to respond to them. The first implies that claim for self-determination by all minority ethnic groups within Yugoslavia stands on a shaky, ambiguous ground. The second implies that all ethnic minorities all over the world have the right to claim for an independent state.

One real trouble in dealing with ethnic conflicts is great power inconsistency, neither clearly adopting the first, nor the second definition of self-determination. Each of them does now use one notion of self-rule or another at their own expediency, which always is their geo-economic and geo-political interests. When a great power decides to go to war on the basis of intangible liberal democratic principles, this inherently encompasses serious policy contradictions and eventually leads to sheer failure. NATO expansion, reform and transformation in accordance with a political organisation, perpetuating and enforcing the ideology of liberal democracy, ended up entailing more problems for the alliance than those which that same transformation was initially supposed to solve. Post intervention realities and ambiguities in the Balkans do strongly indicate failure rather than success for NATO's efforts to bring security and stability in the region after the demise of the Soviet Union. By constantly pretending to be acting on the basis of mere humanitarian intentions in the region, the USA failed to dissolve the substantive inconsistencies inherent in its policy. The only way to put an end to these policy contradictions is to bravely admit the real concern of the campaign, which is to strategically control the Balkans by enclosing rogue enemies and those still ambivalent transition states so as to engage all of them in a clearly subservient relationship (Fouskas 49).

Besides, taken in a broader view, the failure to extract maximum utility from the use or the very acquisition of such a formidable military prowess stems mainly – though not solely –from persisting traditional ways of thinking about organised violence, a misperception of the real character and the true logic of the new warfare. One response to the new wars has been to treat them as Clausewitzean wars in which the warring parties are states or, if not, states, groups with a claim to statehood. Many of the terms used, such as intervention, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, sovereignty, civil war, are drawn from conceptions of the nation-state and of modern war that are not only difficult to apply in the current context, but may actually pose an obstacle to appropriate action. Because the wars cannot be understood in traditional terms, they are thought to represent a reversion to primitivism or anarchy, and the most that can be done, therefore is to ameliorate the symptoms. In other words, wars are treated as natural disasters; hence the use of terms such as complex emergencies, which are emptied of political meaning. Indeed the very term humanitarian is supposed to have a non-political meaning. It has come to be associated with the provision of humanitarian relief assistance in wars, or help to non-combatants or the wounded, rather than with respect for human rights, which was implied in the classic usage of the term humanitarian intervention (Kaldor 121).

A different approach towards solving this conflict is needed, a much more political, rather than military response to these wars. A strategy of capturing hearts and minds, of inclusion, of respect for international politics and legal norms. What is actually needed is "a new form of cosmopolitan political mobilisation, which embraces both the so-called international community and local populations, and which is capable of countering the submission to various types of particularism." (Kaldor 121) Actually, revulsion to ethnic cleansing and genocide, as well as respect for human rights do exist and are increasingly becoming an intrinsic component of political

recognised rhetoric. What is needed, however, is political mobilisation, which encompasses much more than mere words and which is supposed to outweigh geopolitics or short-term domestic considerations; it is supposed to be the primary monitor to both policy and action. Up till now, this has never been the case. The US and NATO intervention in Kosovo allowed for refugees to return to their homes, but a more peaceful alternative would have avoided the human agony that resulted from the bombings. Instead of war fighting, policing through a cosmopolitan approach would be meant to directly protect the people rather than cause them to die or to suffer. It involves such techniques as humanitarian passageways, safe harbours, no-fly zones, international monitors, as well as arrests and trials of all war criminals. This cosmopolitan approach would allow the establishment of a secure atmosphere for people to act freely without fear and for more inclusive forms of politics to be fostered. Yet, these alternative possibilities are always extremely difficult to be applied and have hence hardly ever been tried (Kaldor 121, 143).

The difficulty of implementing such an approach stems from practical issues, but it also mainly stems from the very manner in which the United States, who has absolute authority over NATO and important control over the United Nations, perceives force, its dimension in its foreign policy, its usage, its nature and its very utility. In this regard, the Clinton years did in no way differ from the Bush years. A persistent pattern of heavy reliance on military power as a tool to attain national objectives that do all serve in one way or another America's interest is easily discernible. Not that pursuing national interest is negative per se, but the fact that the term has become so elastic as to include an unimagined spectrum of considerations the complexity and subjectivity of which renders it almost impossible to aspire for any kind of altruistic endeavour. Domestic political concerns do as well determine the foreign policy stance, which often entails avoiding whatever is politically dangerous even if it is the right thing to do. Furthermore, this constant heavy reliance

on the use of force, despite the availability of a full range of soft power attributes, has until now lacked a proper consideration of a genuine revision of the very perception that underlines such a preference and of the way to make it effective. The result is in most of the cases a hesitant and inappropriate usage of military power. A careful understanding of the way republican sensitivity to the use of force is hindering its very use, instead of merely reacting to and trying to clumsily realign within those traditional lines, would allow for a better and more balanced usage of that same force. Likewise, taking the time to wisely consider the general traits of the post-Cold War world, of the true nature of its superficially sporadic violence and of the specificities of each crisis might pave the ground for a world order where major bloody conflicts including genocides and ethnic cleansings are prevented rather than dealt with.

1.4 **The Clinton Doctrine for the Use of Force: A Newer American Way of War**

Although neither the president nor any of his chief lieutenants made apparent efforts to replace the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine that they had discarded, and although the way the administration seems to have responded to each of the mentioned crisis in an improvised way, distinctive patterns, particular routines and definite lines of conduct emerged. By the end of the 1990's these became hardened habits that altogether made up a Clinton Doctrine for the use of force (Cohen). However different President Clinton's Doctrine seems to be from Powell's, one definite criterion is common to both, and that is the United States is not supposed to engage in any military adventure that might jeopardise the lives of American service personnel. For President Clinton, this was the cornerstone of his dogma for he knew now beyond any doubt that all American presidents who presided over those nation's wars where troops died did never get re-elected (Ferguson 140).

Despite the growing importance of US Air Force, compared to the other services, the Clinton Doctrine for the use of military force did include more than mere reliance on it and did expand further beyond the mere sphere of liberal missions and clear national interests. It did not create a new way of war per se, as globalisation has seemingly made war in its traditional form obsolete, but it created a firm ground for the US military establishment to still fight and win the nation's wars relevant to the administration's grand strategy. The military had now to maintain greater openness, enforce the rules that guarantee a stable globalised world and reaffirm America's leadership. The Clinton Doctrine was based on the use of force as a tool of coercive diplomacy in such a way as to create a new paradigm that allowed for the extraction of more utility at lesser costs.

The first major pillar of this doctrine is immaculate destruction achieved through the frequent and regular use of cruise missiles and aircraft armed with precision-guided munitions whenever Washington wanted to coerce, persuade or punish enemies of the US and of the globalised world's stability. "Launched from surface ships, or submarines operating over the horizon, or from B-52 bombers flying beyond the range of enemy air defences, cruise missiles offered the USA the ability to reach out and hit large fixed installations virtually everywhere. Better still the use of cruise missiles effectively reduced the likelihood of US casualties to zero" (Bacevich, *American Empire* 148), even when piloted aircraft is used because reliance on and judicious use of stealth and standoff capabilities allowed for a high level of safety. At the same time, the availability of "a panoply of manned and unmanned weapons composing its air arsenal enabled the USA to customize the impact it wished to make—a big bang or a small one, a campaign or a onetime shot." (Bacevich, American Empire 149) Immaculate Destruction became thus the preferred paradigm of a grand strategy revolving around the objective of shaping the international

environment; it was the concept of war best attuned with the proactive and flexible use of precisely calibrated force and hence a candid and total departure from the institutionalised lessons of Vietnam.

The idea that it is possible to use undisputedly superior air power strategically and independently of ground forces was especially tempting. A virtually risk-free military option, relying on air force became the basis of the optimum strategy. This meant that the USA could get involved in areas where US involvement in improper wars was deemed unavoidable, but at the same time extremely hazardous, given the irregular nature of the ground warfare involved. Cruise missile strikes became frequently invoked as the first hard-hitting measures to be taken after economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation had failed. They became a first-choice option because of their supposed utility in making some coercive point without necessarily entailing a domestic political crisis. However, the assertion that air power could defeat an enemy on its own always depends, in theory, on the Clausewitzean centres of gravity approach (62). Considering regular war, Clausewitz focuses on the centre of gravity of the whole nation and not only of an army in battle, whatever this might be. Nowadays the term has become used to refer to any enemy's potentially decisive vulnerability. Because everybody "must have a centre of gravity so then, it is assumed, must every army or every society. All that has to be done is to identify and to attack this centre." (11) This crude political theory assumes that damage to some critical components of any society – by essence a closed interdependent system – has the capacity to bring everything else to a crushing halt. This damage can be achieved from the air. This entails inflicting real pain on the enemy's society and paradoxically not necessarily meeting the political objectives of the air strikes. Essentially, this strategy can influence the enemy's calculations to a large extent, but can in no way achieve the physical control of enemy decision making, which is generally attained

following a land offensive. The 1990's experience with exclusive reliance on air power demonstrated that external military interventions intended to ease and overcome local conflicts could entail active and often vigorous military operations. This involves an increased reliance on air power and more averseness to make use of ground troops despite the many counterproductive effects (Freedman 11, 162-5).

Yet, given the numerous advantages of the strategy to Washington, it became the preferred tool of coercion in the 1990's. Like the gunboats used by the American navy more than a century ago, cruise missiles are at the same time amazingly efficient and domestically safe as they could be used to deliver fire power abroad without necessarily threatening the domestic political process (Williams 127). As such, these long-range striking forces are now faced with much political acceptability and have been the preferred military tool of the Clinton administration even before Somalia. These were first used against an Iraqi Intelligence headquarter on June 26, 1993 as a commensurate and firm response to an alleged Iraqi plot to assassinate former president Bush. Twenty-three cruise missiles, each mounting a warhead with eight hundred pounds of explosives were launched. Then once again in September 1996 as a continuation of Bush Senior's legacy of shielding the Kurds from Saddam Hussein's aggressions, Operation Desert Strike, where B-52 bombers and US navy warships launched a total of forty-for missiles against Iraqi military forces, ended without a single US casualty. Again, in the fall of 1998, while facing impeachment at home, President Clinton made use of force after Saddam Hussein expelled UN weapons inspectors. Operation Desert Fox was launched on December 16 to degrade Iraqi military capabilities. Ninety-seven targets were blasted by US forces and the Royal Air Force. US military aircraft hovered more than 600 sorties and American warships hurled around three hundred and thirty cruise missiles, with B-52's delivering another ninety. Despite its declared success, the operation left the

Iraqi president all the more defiant as he soon declared his rejection of the no-fly zones and started an aggressive contesting campaign against coalition forces. Precision-guided bombs were used every time President Saddam defied the allied forces in the north and south of Iraq (White 23-65).

Despite the fact that some 2,000 missiles and bombs were expended against Iraqi targets during 1999 and 2000 by US forces, Iraq was in no way the only adversary against whom coercive air and missile force had been used. In 1998, in response to terrorist attacks on American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, President Clinton ordered the US Navy to launch missiles on presumed terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan, where Bin Laden allegedly made or distributed chemical weapons. The cruise missile strikes did achieve nothing more than destroying a factory in Khartoum and making of Al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden worldwide celebrities (Boot 326). Yet, Operation Infinite Reach represented two significantly important shifts in the USA regarding terrorism. First, terror, which used to be classified as a criminal matter falling under the jurisdiction of US courts and police, did become now – with the attack on Ben Laden's site – part of the Pentagon's responsibility as well. A second shift in policy was the proactive nature of America's approach after its attack on Khartoum. Force was now used no longer to retaliate, but to pre-empt whenever possible. Terror would henceforth be fought offensively and not merely defensively. Operation Infinite Reach was meant to highlight the effective and judicious administration's use of military power. It fully occurred on American terms, drawing upon the high-tech long-range strike amazing capabilities, eliminating uncertainty, constantly over watched and guided by the president and his lieutenants and coming off without any US casualties. As such this new approach to the utility of force gave the American president an almost free hand and an absolute authority over the use of force. The chief executive only

notifies or consults first-class members of Congress before launching the offensive. (Bacevich, *American Empire* 153-4)

The Clinton administration's penchant for coercive diplomacy through the use of air force, frequently relying on missiles to impose discipline gradually became routine and noncontroversial. As high altitude bombing of different worldwide targets did in no way affect the American citizen, and, consequently the US political process, both the American elite and the American people tacitly approved the Clinton Doctrine for the use of force. It was an effective way of fostering openness, chasing American interests in the four corners of the planet and, at the same time, demonstrating and legitimizing Washington's claim for world leadership. Air power had actually become, as one senior military officer declared, "the instrument of choice in America's foreign policy." (qtd. in White 83)

The use of air force alone, however, to attain those objectives proved problematic ever since the revolution in military affairs has forever changed the way America goes to war. It in fact did allow the country to undertake all types of military adventures abroad with extremely limited political as well as human cost and did in this respect put a definite end to the Vietnam syndrome, or so it seemed. Reliance on cruise-missile diplomacy on its own maintained the breach between politics on the one hand and war on the other as it prevented the latter from being an adequate tool of the former. Out of fear of public discontent that costs presidents their re-elections, American strategists have never really succeeded in finding a proper use of force commensurate with the nation's post-Cold War proclaimed role and status. The immediate result has always been a vague rhetoric that largely reflected the ambiguity inherent in the relationship between politics and war, the republic and its military, democracy and imperial aspirations. Every time new doctrines and new techniques originate to allegedly correct wrongs involved in America's way of war, those

same doctrines and techniques become in turn problematic and the scenario goes on. Unless the very perception of war and of its authentic dimension and role in the Republic is genuinely reconsidered, all revisions and innovations are hardly useful.

It seemed that President Clinton had enough vision to understand that. He skilfully managed to find a way to extract maximum utility from the use of force by finding a measure that would, when used effectively, solve the problem of republican aversion to the use of force. Consequently, a newer version of the American way of war emerged during his presidency. It seemed to be the perfect answer to the existing friction between a republican tradition abhorring militarism and a bellicose nature.

Air power was one of two pillars of the Clinton Doctrine for the use of force. There where air power failed to reach the desired outcome, other techniques to enforce the rules and at the same time to keep the cost of US military adventures abroad low, were available to US policymakers. Colonial troops or mercenaries have been historically used by empires to facilitate the encumbrance of imperial policing. Similarly, the US, during the presidency of Bill Clinton, made extensive use of the modern version of ancient Gurkhas[31]. The immediate advantage was that the USA was allocating to defence, less than three percent of its gross national product, by the end of the 1990's. That was the lowest proportion since the eve of WWII. The second advantage is that since 1940 the proportion of the American population in active military service had similarly dropped to its lowest level. At the same time, service in the armed forces became increasingly and substantially less hazardous than ever (Bacevich, *American Empire* 155-6).

[31] A Gurkha is a member of the Nepalese force that has been part of the British army for 200 years. Gurkhas are known for their loyalty, fearlessness, prowess and fierceness in combat.

One important way to reach America's objectives within its overall grand strategy, while preserving effort, blood, treasure and public support was to insure that a non-American is used on the line of fire. Whenever ground troops were needed for greatly arduous tasks and dangerous fighting entailing extensive risk of large-scale losses, foreign armies or other proxies were increasingly relied on. Being expected to do the dirty work instead of US troops, those surrogates had to be generously aided by the USA. The aid provided varied between offering generous funds, specialised support, training, giving American expertise and material, advising and equipping. To substitute soldiers for specific military functions, government contractors, including civilian pilots, for example, are used as well. Contracting such tasks out to private companies proved enormously advantageous; these former carrier professionals now hired as military operators or trainers during the 1990's did now enjoy a much brighter status than that of the ancient mercenaries or soldiers of fortune for now they do have the entire backing of US authorities. (Bacevich, *American Empire* 155-62) Used in Colombia, in Haiti, in Saudi Arabia – where US firms enjoy a considerable monopoly on military training – these US firms prosper largely on the basis of government contracts. Similarly, the privatisation of war is increasingly offering a lucrative second career for former US military officers. Their expertise has become a way for them to gain money and an important alternative to US soldiers (Shearer 62).

On various occasions, President Clinton combined both tools to maximize the benefit of US military interventions and minimise their cost. In Bosnia, for example, when in 1995 Washington decided to intervene, it coordinated an air campaign with a ground offensive conducted by a contractor-supported foreign army to guarantee an easy victory. What ostensibly looked as a demonstration of how effective the use of air power was to end the conflict in Bosnia was in reality the outcome of powerful ground assaults made by the Croat army against Slobodan

Milosevic. This army had been trained and modernised by retired US military officers. The use of a third party to end the conflict in Bosnia was an effective mechanism of US policy in the Balkans that had a considerably lower political risk and lesser human cost (Shearer 58-62).

During the Clinton years, the chances of an American serviceman being killed by hostile action while on active duty were less than one in 160,000. He was six times more likely to be murdered by one of his comrades, nineteen times more likely to kill himself, and fifty times more likely to die in an accident. Indeed, in 1999 a young American was almost as likely to be a victim of hostile fire if he stayed in high school than if he joined the army (Ferguson 140). One exception would be the Black Hawk Down fiasco in Mogadishu. Despite claims that the shooting down of the two US helicopters was mere good luck, it was rather insightful calculations that allowed for Aideed's forces to kill 18 American Rangers. Every enemy is known to advertise his typical weakness in the very way he fights. The American weakness was the unwillingness of its soldiers to die. The only way to kill a ranger is to make him stand and fight and that is why the warlord's forces brought the helicopters down. Americans' weakness lies in their very ostensible superiority, their aversion to casualties. The death of the 18 Rangers was not the worst aspect of the Mogadishu fiasco, but the death of probably more civilian Somali children, women and men under the indiscriminate fire of panicking Rangers (Bowden 166). Success or failure of this newer American way of war depends on the lens you are using and the angle you are standing at.

The Clinton Doctrine for the use of force, joining the use of proxy ground troops to reliance on air power did actually solve the issue of the utility of force, as war could now be used as an effective tool of policy. It gave the impression that Americans do have now a way of war rather than a mere way of battle, as Weigley had assumed in 1973. If one considers the consequences of the intervention on the region in which it takes place, however, the concern for military victory

still overarches the concern for the political outcome of the war. Despite attempts at engaging in nation-building efforts, every US military commitment is conditioned. Reshaping the world and putting an end to the symptoms of chaos necessitate full and unconditional commitment. If wrongs are to be corrected with the use of force then this same force is to be used wholeheartedly with the intention, not of winning, but of correcting the very causes of these wrongs. Pax Americana requires stomach. It cannot coexist with aversion to death. Yet, fear of casualties is a symptom and not a root cause; it does reflect contradictions in the very premises on which the republic was first founded. Compromise seems to be an effective balm to sooth the symptoms, but it does in no way nullify the persisting existence of the dysfunction. Consequently, external manifestations of these contradictions will persist, but each time with a new disguise.

This been said, even this newer version of the American war of war can in no way effectively deal with the new types of organised violence. The latter requires political understanding of the nature of modern warfare; it also requires authentic humanitarian intentions, a persevering reliance on soft power and, when extremely necessary, resort to a kind of force that is constantly under the sovereignty of politics. In conclusion, if the United States is genuinely willing to make this world safe for democracy then it is supposed to give up on its exaggerated aversion to casualties—itself a manifestation of the very contradictions inherent in the nation's values. An army whose goal is first and foremost the safety of its members can never be used to pursue such grandiose foreign policy goals.

Conclusion

Within the context of globalisation, economic considerations and US national security became inseparable. At the same time, the process of decolonisation and the implosion of nation states gave rise to genocides, ethnic cleansing and various aspects of human rights abuses in many

corners of the globe. The Clinton administration penchant for democracy promotion and human right defence faced its major test in the Balkans. The administration's reluctance to effectively intervene in Bosnia to stop Milosevic's ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims was then forcefully replaced by a gradual air-bombing strategy that prolonged the conflict and led to the destruction of infrastructure together with a big number of civilian casualties. The same carnage was replayed in Kosovo. The same military strategy was adopted and the same result was obtained.

The way the two interventions were undertaken suggests that while the term humanitarian war is an oxymoron, American humanitarian war is a double oxymoron indeed. The very fact that the new American way of war exclusively depended on the use of air bombing to spare the lives of its troops means that the so-called humanitarian intervention resulted in the death of the very civilians it was meant to protect and in the destruction of their infrastructure, which lead to chaotic long-term repercussions. This reflects a way of war that still cannot or does not want to transform short-term military victories into long-term political successful achievements.

The new of war under President Clinton added mercenaries to cruise missiles as a new comprehensive tool of coercive diplomacy. It allowed for a bigger extraction of utility from the use of force. Yet it still raises important questions on the very cracks that exist behind the republic willingness to play a hegemonic world. What internal cost is the United States willing to pay if it is to genuinely play this universal role?

GENERAL CONCLUSION

War is a neat reflection of the society that wages it. The cultural heritage of a given society definitely determines its military behaviour. Political culture does have the most significant impact on the way a given society chooses to make use of war. Perception determines the manner. War is undeniably an instrument of policy meant to serve and to be guided by superseding political objectives. War might have its own grammar, but never its own logic; otherwise, it descends into a savage chaotic use of force. Because war is the creation of the state, solely state interest justifies and legitimises resort to it. For war to be effective, and not only justified, it must never be separated from strategy; it must always submit its will to the will of politics.

In the United States of America, a distinct approach to warfare emerged out of the marriage of a European warfare mindset and a frontier spirit. It also had its origin in the republican institution that reflected the Founding Fathers' sense of uniqueness and exceptionalism and their fear of tyrannical monarchical rule and aversion to power politics. The American Constitution does reflect a political tradition that abhors standing armies and is suspicious towards military officers. The way the founding fathers meant war to be conceived of and used in the newly created Republic drew the limits within which America would go to war. The approach also stems from the nineteenth century tradition of popular industrial war, based on the Napoleonic model of warfare, and later on reformed by the Prussians, relying on the mobilization –through compulsory military conscription—and the unprecedented mobility of sheer mass to crush the enemy.

The resulting American way of war reflected all the contradictions inherent in the country's perception of war and its actual use of it. Antimilitarism had to cohabit with bellicosity at the very core of the classical American way of war; the result was a sharp ambivalence in the relationship

between the country's republican culture and its military establishment. The latter was perceived at the same time as a guardian of and a threat to freedom. While it was kept at the margin of society in times of peace, it was required to manage a swift and decisive victory in times of war. The republic had no stamina for prolonged conflicts resulting in casualties. There then emerged a way of war reflecting the inherent incongruity and its resulting sensitivity.

Prior to the Civil War and given the limited military capabilities of the developing nation, a small war tradition developed used against Native Americans with no discrimination between combatants and non-combatants and against any enemy that stood in face of the republic's territorial expansion and growing economic interests. Against mightier enemies, big wars based on a strategy of attrition were fought whenever necessary. The country then capitalized on its huge territory, the enormously vast population, significant advances in technology applied to transportation and war making, in addition to the support and mobilization of the American citizens when their Republic goes to war. These factors helped create a peculiar American way of war. The most dominant strategy underlining this way of war was a strategy of annihilation, that of overthrowing and crushing the enemy with fire and sheer mass to destroy his very ability to fight.

Overwhelming mass, developed technology and high mobility made of the USA thus the mightiest military power of the twentieth century. An American way of war based upon a strategy of annihilation, reflecting an all-or-nothing paradigm and an absolutist mindset, was firmly established by the end of the nineteenth century. It was the beginning in the United States of America of a war tradition based on industrial capabilities and on targeting nothing less than swift and decisive annihilating victories. The American Civil War was the first of America's wars of annihilation, a total industrialised war where the 'war is hell' paradigm was firmly established as war's own logic, completely separate from that of politics. It initiated a tradition of warfare

grounded in the assumption that refining war prolongs it and leads to more suffering, while quick annihilation of the opponent speeds up the end of suffering. Cruelty in war became justified, while the concept of proportionality much emphasised by the just war tradition could no longer serve an American war tradition that abhorred casualties and dreaded lingering conflicts. War, as now understood by American military officers, was not a continuation of politics, as Clausewitz had pointed out, but a response to the failure of politics, not an art, but a science. Once initiated, it was no longer under the sovereignty of politics, but accountable only to its own logic, which in turn revolves around the technicality of winning battles.

If the American Civil War was America's first war of annihilation, the Second World War was both its archetype and its apotheosis. Both Pearl Harbour and the Nazi way of war were used to justify the unleashing of the absolutist mindset now climaxing in the use of the absolute weapon. The nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the war marked the ultimate culmination of America's strategy of annihilation, of the paradigm of using an excess of means to achieve swift and crushing military victories. An American way of war now endowed with a nuclear arsenal ensured the extraction of maximum political utility from the use of force without having to submit war to the logic of policy. WWII was forcefully closed and peace and reconstruction both imposed at the barrel of the atomic gun.

The ensuing Cold War, however, the Soviet successful development of their own atomic bomb, gave rise to the first of a series of crises that would transform the American Way of War. Nuclear deterrence, as a major pillar of American military strategy during the Cold War, and the possibility of mutual assured destruction inherent in any potential thermonuclear war, made the prospect of absolute war, where each enemy is utterly annihilated, practically feasible. As a result, war nullified itself. Limited War fought with limited means and reaching for limited objectives

became a necessary alternative for absolute war. Calibrated use of force became necessary now that the American way of war with its nuclear dimension was no longer in accordance with the classical paradigm of warfare. It became now incumbent upon war to submit to the will of politics with all the limitations that are now an intrinsic part of US strategy. No overwhelming force could be used and no decisive victories achieved. Yet, even if, during the cold war, war got back to its natural trajectory as a continuation of politics by other means, its utility and the degree to which national security strategy was transformed to match the Cold War exigencies was once more questionable.

Eventually, while the adoption of limited war proved its efficiency during the Korean War, it gave birth, in Vietnam, to the biggest of America's international scandals. What started as a limited war in Vietnam ended up as a lingering highly costly military entanglement. Instead of pacification, a combination of air campaigns and search-and-destroy techniques were used against Vietnamese guerrillas. Both proved useless. While assuming to be limited by political considerations, American strategy did in no way differ from the classical apolitical paradigm of attrition and then annihilation. The result was utter disconnection between military means and political objectives and total destruction of a country Washington meant to defend and to build. In Vietnam, limited war fought with the persisting absolutist mindset proved problematic. Having habitually been focusing on the development of nuclear deterrence and on the improvement of conventional warfare, the US military strategy proved lacking in counterinsurgency techniques that needed to be used against guerrilla forces in Indochina. Similarly, because democracies cannot indulge in protracted military adventures, the first and foremost concern of American military strategy in Vietnam was minimizing US casualties. The strategy also proved lacking in the very understanding of the sociocultural context and the nature of the conflict it seemingly intervened to

stop in Southeastern Asia. Consequently, the war in Vietnam was lost before it even started. The ensuing failure exposed the defects inherent in a strategy that does not project itself beyond the immediate aim of war, which is military victory. It also exposed the need for a review of America's small war tradition as an integral component of American war making, rather than an aberration to the American way of war. Confronting guerrilla necessitated a distillation of past experience lessons, a reconsideration of the apolitical bias that had until now badly affected the conduct of the nation's wars and a serious reconsideration of strategy altogether.

Vietnam was a blow to American credibility inside and outside, a failure of its policy of containment and deterrence, the source of a severe civilian-military rupture and became in the annals of military history the very example of how a war should never be fought. A Vietnam syndrome manifest in Washington's reluctance to deploy its forces abroad would haunt the American mind for decades to come and would lead to an atmosphere of self-doubt and self-questioning within the political and the military circles. Yet, the crisis was at the same time an opportunity for US strategists to at last reconsider the proper utility and the adequate use of military power to reach political objectives in accordance with the nation's principles and interests. What eventually emerged was a set of guidelines defining the why, the when and the how the US forces should be employed. The Weinberger/Powell Doctrine was a distillation of the lessons learned from Vietnam and a revamping of the strategy underlining war making. America would go to war, according to Caspar Weinberger and to Collin Powell, with the use of overwhelming force, only as a last resort, wholeheartedly, in defence of vital national interest, with clearly stated objectives, with reasonable public support and with a clear exit strategy. The doctrine did thus place powerful fetters on the deployment of US troops to avoid vague entanglement in revolutionary or regional conflicts in the world unless US interest was clearly at stake.

Although the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine was supposed to be a new conception of the political utility of force, it was in reality nothing more than a reformulation of the classical American way of war. It did acknowledge the limits inherent in the ambivalent relationship between a republican culture and a bellicose nature and did realign with them. Vietnam was a failure, the doctrine reflected, because it was not fought in accordance with the absolutist mindset. It clearly echoed the distrust of military officers of limited use of force because of their risk aversion. Military means would again determine the shaping of political ends, rather than the reverse. At the core, apoliticism was once more confirmed, justified and sustained for years to come.

For technology enthusiasts this meant a perfect opportunity for the use of force with more efficiency and lesser cost. These were celebrating a set of technological and coordinating innovations developed under the name of the Revolution in Military Affairs, a combination of military reforms that completely transformed the balance of power to the American advantage. RMA promised to reduce – to the point of elimination – the fog inherent in war making. It brought the prospect of predictable, controllable and humane warfare that would transcend the Republic's aversion to casualties. These developments in conventional war were accompanied by massive spending on Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) meant to protect the US territory and citizens from a potential Soviet nuclear first strike. These transformations gave the USA an unmatched military superiority in conventional as well as nuclear warfare. The army was also improving with the ending of the draft and the adoption of the All-Volunteer-Force. The Soviets tried to keep the pace with the American military innovations by introducing a series of reforms that eventually led, together with other factors, to the collapse of the Soviet empire. The Cold War was over.

The passing of the Cold War created a new political and strategic landscape that again necessitated a reconsideration of Washington's purpose in the world together with the appropriate role of its military in achieving that same purpose. The United States was now an unmatched global hegemon with an unprecedented military prowess. It thus set out to announce a New World Order where America's military might would continue to be of momentous significance in supporting America's role, no longer to fight Communism, but to face new threats to the world stability. These would mainly emerge in the Third World. That meant reorienting the US security concern from high to low-intensity conflicts that necessitate new capabilities and approaches to project America's power in those areas. Military operations other than war (MOOTW) would necessitate the frequent deployment of US troops to restore peace and order in zones of tremendous conflict. It was a return to America's tradition of proactive small wars. The move from regular to irregular wars would essentially necessitate, in addition to military strength, endurance, which the US military – trained for high intensity conflicts only – lacked. Casualty aversion had always been incorporated in both military trainings and grand strategies. Consequently, every military reform did promote a capitalisation on assets rather than a correction of deficiencies. Even after Vietnam, no military training did include a tutoring on counter-insurgency. With the emergence of regional conflicts in the proclaimed new world order, it was high time the military reconsidered the growingly important dimension of low-intensity conflicts in the nation's way of war.

The first regional challenge to the new world order was Iraqi's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 to which the USA responded with vigour, evicting and defeating Iraqi forces in no more than six weeks. The crisis was an opportunity to test the newly developed weapons and techniques as well as the efficiency of the admonitions of the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine. The result was another "splendid little war" in the US history books. The way the Gulf War was waged, the speed with

which the crushing victory was obtained, the small number of American casualties, and, ultimately, the conformity of the war with the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine all led to the vindication of both America's indispensable role in the post-Cold War world and the much-celebrated new way of war. It was the beginning of a military age of immaculate destruction, a surgical-like predictable and controllable warfare. Victory in the war also restored both the image and the credibility of the US military in its public's eyes and seemed to have once and for all exorcised the Vietnam demons.

Ultimately, the shift from compulsory military service to the AVF, the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine, RMA, the victorious closure of the Cold War, and the quick and relatively low-cost success in the Persian Gulf War all combined to transform U.S. approach to warfare. Mass mobilization, compulsory military service and popular involvement in wars in terms of economic and human cost were no longer significant hallmarks of the American Way of War. AVF and the use of newer technologies would apparently yield a new way of war, reducing the need to expose large numbers of young men to the hazards of combat and thereby keeping the popular support needed for US wars to be fought and won.

The success of the short-term political objectives of the American military astounding show of force in the Gulf War, namely the restoration of Kuwait's territorial integrity, the securing of the oil fields and the defeat of President Saddam Hussein led to a state of euphoria in the United States of America among the public, policy makers and military officers. Yet, the war was criticized for the human agony it left on the Iraqi side, the number of civilian casualties, the destruction of infrastructure, the ensuing epidemics and the return of Iraq to pre-industrial state conditions. To the west and especially to the American public, however, the war was a genuine success. The use of technology in warfare gave birth to a severe human and moral detachment *vis-à-vis* the agony resulting from war on the other side of the battlefield. The American citizen

became a mere spectator of his country's wars now covered by a controlled media. The prospect of a controllable and human warfare did seemingly in no way apply to the targeted region. Despite the superficial changes, the new American way of war did retain the essence of the paradigm of the classical way of war, the 'war is hell' mindset.

The Gulf War was also condemned for having left many regional issues unresolved and for allowing the Saddam regime to repress Shiite and Kurdish opponents in the North and the South of Iraq. The war had also resulted in a more frequent use of US military power either in Iraq to enforce the no fly zones, or elsewhere in the world where many were seemingly not dissuaded by America's prowess to challenge President Bush's new world order. Likewise, the war could not be properly perceived as a test case to prove or deny the validity and the utility of America's new way of war given the military weakness of the enemy. Furthermore the American military involvement in the Persian Gulf Crisis and the establishment of permanent military bases in the Middle East would have a long-lasting blowback impact on the credibility and hence the security of America and its citizens.

The world grew even more unpredictable and more dangerous in the 1990's because of the destabilizing forces of globalisation. The multi-level interconnectedness of the post-Cold War environment had a fatal effect on political authority; it led – among other things – to the erosion of modern states' monopoly of legitimate organised force, which is an essential prerequisite for internal security. This political, economic and military interconnectedness coincided with the centrifugal effects of the implosion of former Soviet satellites and the rise of nationalism with its aggressive revolutionary nature. The process of decolonisation and the implosion of nation states gave rise to genocides, ethnic cleansing and various aspects of human rights abuses in many corners of the globe. A new type of organised violence emerged out of these processes; although

less extreme than the wars among states fought in the past, it was much more pervasive and long lasting; instead of disappearing in the new world climate, wars took on a new shape.

Within this context, the grand strategy of the Clinton administration's main goal was to position the United States at the very heart of economic globalisation, promote democracy and enforce American-style openness by forcing, reforming and controlling a system of political, economic and military alliances. Because economic considerations and national security have become inseparable, and because trade became a priority element in American national security policy, the use of hard power was essential in maintaining America's economic interests within a globalised world. The unmatched technological advances applied to the military seemed to be a perfect rational for the use of force, not only to safeguard America's interests but also to intervene whenever and wherever the will of the United Nations was defied.

The path started with a military intervention in Somalia to put an end to civil war and famine in 1991. Use of force in the African country to support peace operations, which in turn became a nation-building attempt ended in a fiasco. Eighteen rangers were killed and a soldier's corpse was pulled through the streets of Mogadishu. What started as a humanitarian endeavor and then a small war was now a first-class political crisis for the Clinton administration. President Clinton, now rejecting his own campaigns policies, announced the termination of US presence in Somalia altogether. This failure drastically affected America's future decisions to intervene with the use of force in scenarios that looked similar to Mogadishu.

The Clinton administration penchant for democracy promotion and human right defence faced its second major test in the Balkans, where uniquely violent manifestations of nationalism took place. Caught between the urgency of preserving European security and integration, and between the persisting frustrations engendered by the Mogadishu fiasco – a micro replay of

Vietnam – the Clinton administration was reacting to the escalating crises with great caution and hesitation. For the US military, using troops to restore peace in Bosnia was out of question. Engaging the army in a military adventure that would violate the tenets of the new American way of war as prescribed by Casper Weinberger and Colin Powell was no easy task. The nature of the conflict *per se* was not clear nor was the threat to American security that the crisis presented. Yet, according to civilian decision makers, namely ambassador Madeleine Albright, using force to coerce was different from making war; imposing peace at the barrel of the gun had nothing to do with bellicosity. Military technology had now transformed the art of warfare into a scientifically measurable immaculate destruction that could be used to manage, rather than take direct part into, the newly emerging wars.

The administration's reluctance to effectively intervene in Bosnia to stop Milosevic's ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims was thus replaced by a gradual high altitude air-bombing strategy that prolonged the conflict and led to the destruction of infrastructure and the killing of civilian Bosnians in what was justified as collateral damage. Like in Vietnam, air campaigns were slaying the very victims of violence they were meant to protect and defend. Innocent civilians were being sacrificed for the sake of keeping US aircrews safe. The crisis ended in the partitioning of Bosnia and an open-ended nation-building endeavour where peace had to be maintained by the force of arms. The same carnage was replayed in Kosovo. In an intervention that was largely humanitarian, the amount of civilian bloodshed and of deportation of Kosovars was appalling. The United States and NATO once more adopted high-altitude bombing strategies because they were in no way willing to risk the lives of the bombers to Serbian anti-aircraft fire. Once more, the American way of war now applied for humanitarian purposes demonstrated the impossibility of an exclusive use of air power to win wars or even to coerce enemies into submission.

In the Balkans, the defender of human rights became t*he* perpetuator of terror killing of civilians. Actually, the way the Somali and then the Balkan tragedies were managed does raise significant questions on the possibility of safeguarding human rights in the new 'humanitarian wars' and *ipso facto* on the very credibility and effectiveness of such wars in addressing various types of humanitarian disasters. In addition to the doubtful sincerity of their moral substance, the double standard inherent in their selective use, the prevalence of political over ethical concerns, the excessive use of air power, there also is a deeper dysfunction with regard to these military interventions. This dysfunction lies in the fundamental misunderstanding of the genuine nature of the conflicts, a misperception of the character and logic of the new warfare. This is manifest in the great power inconsistency for example in adopting a clear and fixed definition of the concept of self-determination. The result is a set of policy contradictions that do not only make these humanitarian military interventions ineffective but that do further complicate the crises they are meant to solve.

A peaceful, cosmopolitan approach meant to directly protect civilians rather than kill them and cause them to suffer would have avoided the Balkan human agony. The new wars require a political response that transcends both the warring parties, geopolitical interests and short-term domestic considerations. They do require a genuine commitment to the understanding of their real nature and to the use of whatever means are needed to bring about a radical and long-lasting solutions. If military means are to be used then it would not be within the scope of war-making, but rather to coerce into submission to international law. The way the United States of America is making use of its military force nowadays has nothing to do with the authentic intention of stopping ethnic cleansing and genocides and of forcing the respect of human rights.

If the term ‘humanitarian war’ is an oxymoron, then ‘American human wars’ is a double oxymoron. The new American way of war based on the premise that technology decides the outcome of war sets a high barrier between the human and the technical aspect of war. Modern wars, where smart bombs and cruise missiles are used to target enemies from afar, rendered warfare a technical undertaking rather than a human-to-human confrontation. Enemies in today’s wars have no faces and, when the boundaries between combatants and non-combatants are blurred as a result of an aversion to casualties that prioritises the security of military personnel to that of innocent civilians, the human himself came to have no face. A hegemon that is unwilling to sacrifice its troops to establish peace can in no way fulfil the role of a humanitarian defender.

Because it proved impossible to extract maximum utility from the use of force with the reliance on air bombings, the new way of war under President Clinton underwent another innovation. Resorting to mercenaries, as an effective substitute for American troops, came to complete the task of cruise missiles for a more proactive use of force throughout the world. Trained and equipped by the United States of America to do the risky part of war, these modern-day Gurkhas allow for the achievement of political goals with the use of force without having to pay the high cost of losing American troops to enemy fire. The republic seems to have at last found the remedy to compromise the anti-military and risk-aversion culture with a bellicose, now hegemonic, nature. The utility of force has at last been restored, or, so it seemed.

This new way of war allowed the USA to maintain the astounding military build-up developed during the Cold War; to make use of war to reach its political objectives, despite a persisting Vietnam Syndrome; and to preserve its global status in the aftermath of the Cold War. It failed though to address the core concern of strategy, that of transmuting military victories into long-lasting political successes. Caught between its desire for a Pax Americana and a republican

culture abhorring lingering commitments and casualties, the United States is doomed to stumble all the way long until it either decides to readdress the very paradigm underlining its use of force, or else step aside and get back to a more comfortable neo-isolationism.

War is actually hell; to the extent that it needs to be used then it must be used with disregard to casualties and with concern to the very motive for which it is fought. Aggression can in many instances be stopped only with the use of aggression, but for a nation or an organization to be credible and trusted in interfering with the use of force to stop aggression and impose peace, it has to first be functioning above its own fears and selfish calculations.

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ملخص

في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، أدت ثقافة استراتيجية خاصة إلى ولادة طريقة حرب سريعة وحاسمة متوقع منها أن تنتهي دائمًا بانتصارات ساحقة. ولدت هذه العقلية الإبادية من تزاوج النزعة القتالية والنظام الجمهوري. كان على الدولة التي استخدمت الحرب طوال تاريخها لأغراض متنوعة أن تجد باستمرار طريقة لموازنة الحاجة إلى استخدام القوة مع الثقافة الجمهورية التي تمقت الضحايا. أدى هذا التناقض إلى قطيعة بين الحرب والسياسة. يتناول البحث الحالي، من خلال مقاربة، حقيقة أنه على الرغم من أن طريقة الحرب هذه قد رافقت بنجاح نمو الولايات المتحدة إلى قوة مهيمنة عالمية ذات امتداد عالمي لا مثيل له، إلا أنها أصبحت في النهاية تنطوي على إشكالات فيما يتعلق بمنفعتها عندما يستحيل استخدام القوة الساحقة. كان فشل الولايات المتحدة في فيتنام في الستينيات الأزمة التي أدت في النهاية إلى إطلاق عملية تحولات عسكرية أدت بدورها إلى خلق طريقة جديدة للحرب. وكانت الصراعات المستمرة في البلقان في التسعينيات هي السياق الذي اختُبرت فيه هذه الطريقة الجديدة للحرب. الطريقة التي استجابت بها الولايات المتحدة للأزمات تشير إلى أن تطور الطريقة الأمريكية في الحرب لا يزال يفشل في معالجة قضية المنفعة السياسية للقوة بشكل كامل وفعال وحاسم. هذا يعني أن الأنماط الثابتة تستمر وتبرز الاستمرارية بدلاً من التغيير. تعكس الأنماط خللاً وظيفيًا عميق الجذور يكشف عن نفسه في نهاية المطاف بالطريقة التي تشن بها الولايات المتحدة الحرب. على الرغم من براعتها العسكرية التي لا مثيل لها وإمبراطورية البنية التحتية العسكرية التي تمتد عبر العالم ، يبدو أن هناك عجزًا عن انتزاع النجاعة السياسية المتناسبة من استخدام هذه القوة الهائلة وترجمة الانتصارات العسكرية الأمريكية الفورية ، عند الحصول عليها ، إلى نجاحات استراتيجية طويلة المدى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التطور؛ المنفعة السياسية للقوة؛ طريقة الحرب.

Résumé

Aux États-Unis d'Amérique, une culture stratégique spécifique a peu à peu donné naissance à un mode de guerre rapide, décisif et qui devait toujours se solder par des victoires écrasantes. Cet état d'esprit absolutiste est né du mariage du bellicisme et du républicanisme. Un pays qui a fait usage de la guerre tout au long de son histoire à des fins diverses a dû constamment trouver un moyen d'équilibrer la nécessité d'utiliser la force contre une culture républicaine qui abhorre les pertes. L'ambivalence a conduit à l'apolitisme du militaire et à une rupture entre guerre et politique. La présente recherche, à travers une approche qualitative, sonde le fait que bien que ce mode de guerre ait accompagné avec succès la croissance des États-Unis en un hégémon mondial avec une portée mondiale sans précédent, il est finalement devenu problématique quant à son utilité face à des situations où l'usage d'une force écrasante était inconcevable. L'échec au Vietnam dans les années 1960 a été *la* crise, qui a finalement déclenché un processus de transformations militaires qui, à son tour, a engendré un nouveau mode de guerre. Les conflits persistants dans les Balkans pendant les années 1990 ont été le contexte dans lequel ce nouveau mode de guerre a été testé. La façon dont les États-Unis ont répondu aux crises suggère que l'évolution de la manière américaine de faire la guerre n'a toujours pas résolu de manière complète, efficace et décisive la question de l'utilité politique de la force. Cela signifie que des modèles constants persistent et mettent en évidence la continuité plutôt que le changement. Ces modèles reflètent un dysfonctionnement profondément enraciné qui se révèle finalement dans la façon dont les États-Unis d'Amérique font la guerre. Malgré ses prouesses militaires inégalées et un empire d'infrastructures militaires qui s'étend sur le globe, il semble y avoir une incapacité à extraire une utilité politique proportionnée de l'utilisation de cette force formidable et à traduire les victoires militaires américaines immédiates, une fois obtenues, en succès stratégiques à long terme.

Mots clés : évolution ; mode de guerre; utilité politique de la force.