THE DISCOURSE OF WAR IN A TIME OF PEACE:

REPRESENTATIONS OF AMERICAN MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE 1990s.

By

GORDON WILSON STABLES, III

Under the direction of JOHN MURPHY

ABSTRACT

This project is an effort to interrogate the discourse of American military operations as sites of ideological controversy in the 1990s. The decade that began so dramatically with the Persian Gulf War contained a series of military operations that continued to refine the nature of what 'wars' are and America, as a media dominated nation, experiences them. These conflicts, represented by case studies of operations in Kosovo, Iraq, and Somalia, were highly visible media events, cooperatively produced by national media corporations and the various departments of the United States federal government. As new media strategies of covering military conflicts converged with increasingly brief and limited operations, the fundamental nature of how America fought, participated, and remembered wars appeared under revision in the 1990s. The implications of these lessons are used to draw some early inferences to the War on Terror.

INDEX WORDS: War rhetoric, national identity, War - media coverage, Iraq, Kosovo, Somalia.

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B.S., James Madison University, 1995

M.A., The University of Georgia, 1998

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2002

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August 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I could only have completed this project with the support from a great many people. I would like to thank my Major Professor, John Murphy, for all of his labor, especially his endless patience with my writing and inability to grasp even basic grammatical concepts. Your thorough commentary and eagerness made this process bearable. I consider myself fortunate to have worked with you.

I was fortunate to study with a number of wonderful professors during my six years in Athens and I have been enriched by my time with my committee members Bonnie Dow, Tom Lessl and Bryant Simon. I feel fortunate to have worked with Celeste Condit, Kevin DeLuca, Thurman Garner, and Cal Logue. I would also like to thank Jerry Hale and the Department of Speech Communication for all of their support. I could not leave Athens without thanking April Lonsinger, the backbone of the Speech Communication Department, and without whom, I would probably still be trapped by years worth of paperwork.

My love for debate drove me to return to graduate school and it provided me with a goal to justify the long hours of work. I knew that many people lose their love for debate under the pressure of graduate school and so I chose to come to Georgia because I could work with and for someone who respected both the process of graduate education and the debate community. I can never thank Ed Panetta enough for the wonderful role model he provided me. I have learned a lot about directing a

college debate program from you, but a whole lot more about how to be a quality human being.

Through my work with the Georgia Debate Union I was truly blessed to work with wonderful coaches and students. I feel very fortunate to have coached alongside Joe Bellon, Mike Davis, Ilon Lauer, Len Neighbors, Ken Rufo, Kate Shuster, Doyle Srader and the hardest working debater and debate coach I ever met, Ryan Galloway. There have been too many debaters to name individually, but they all deserve thanks for making the process of coaching a worthwhile experience for me, especially Chris McIntosh, Bill Roberts, Michael Lee and Shawn Powers.

Gradate school and the dissertation process can be a trying experience, but the friendships I developed allow me to leave Athens with a lifetime of fond memories and a little remaining sanity. In addition to the assistant coaches, I have appreciated the friendships of Paul Achter, Chip Riggs and Windy Lawrence. Paul especially has been someone that I have enjoyed spending time with and could rely on. I will be always be grateful to be your friend.

I am fortunate to have a family that would help to support, both emotionally and financially, a decade long adventure in higher education. They never criticized the wisdom of such an effort, even when I wasn't so sure about it. They unconditionally accepted all of the travel and odd behavior that started with being a high school debater and I am very thankful that their patience has continued long after that first debate tournament in the winter of 1987. Grandma, Mom, Joe, Dad,

Carolyn – thanks I love you all. One last note to my mom, whose lifetime of sacrifice allowed me to even consider graduate school, thanks to the greatest mom a son could ever have.

Finally, I need to thank Jen. I am a very lucky person to have met you. Thanks for being there for me, even when I didn't deserve to have the support of another person, and I hope you always will be. It was your wisdom that suggested getting a puppy while writing a dissertation and you were right. On a related note, thanks to Daphe for always taking it upon herself to remind me if I was idling at the computer for too long.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> He [Clinton] had authorized the military strike, the country was at war whether it wanted to admit it or not, our bombers were hitting targets in Europe every day, and the country went about its business as usual. It was something stunningly new – war in a time of peace.
>
> - - David Halberstam, 2001

Introduction

This project is an effort to interrogate the mass mediated discourse that presented and described American military operations in the 1990s.[1] I contend that dramatic changes in the manner in which the United States waged military operations and the ways in which media organizations reported on these operations produced a synthesis distinct from earlier periods in American history. These military operations embraced a contradictory nature. As David Halberstam put it in the title of his latest work, *War in a Time of Peace*, a transformation occurred between traditional wars and contemporary conflicts; the nation experienced its conflicts on television, but they failed to change the lives of most Americans. Far from a lack of exposure, these conflicts were highly visible media events, cooperatively produced by national media corporations and the various departments of the United States federal government. As new media strategies of covering military conflicts converged with increasingly brief and limited operations, the

fundamental nature of how America fought, participated, and remembered wars appeared under revision in the 1990s.

This analysis looks to the discourse surrounding American military operations, not solely for their extension of the genre of war discourse, but also because of the ways in which they produced representations of a unified American identity. The project explores the patterns that appear in the coverage of military operations as manifestations of a national 'Americanness' that seeks to write over political and social divisions. As Marita Sturken argued,

> When Americans watch events of "national" importance – the Persian Gulf War … on television, they perceive themselves to be part of a national audience regardless of their individual political views of cultural background. Citizenship can thus be enacted through live television (pp. 13-14).

This effort is designed to provide a more detailed analysis of those moments when national media culture represents the nation as a unified whole, responding to a national crisis. This project works with Douglas Kellner's contention that media culture provides the building blocks for personal, and by extension, communal identity (1995, p. 1) and argues that cultural critics must examine how the nation is represented in these unique moments if we are enhance our understanding of what constitutes American identity(ies).

The project situates both the Vietnam War and the Gulf War as seminal events in the relationship between war and the reproduction of American identities; both the means of representing identity and those subsequent representations must be understood in light of these dramatic events. This study argues that a series of military operations in the

1990s refined the way Americans experience conflicts and this produced important changes in dominant representations of American political identity. Amidst the flood of information about lessons of World War II, Vietnam, and the Gulf War, this project explores these representations in the contexts of three particular 'lessons' of military operations: how they are initially justified, how support for operations is maintained, and how the conclusions of operations are understood.

The study begins with a discussion of the key terms of analysis, most notably the importance of exploring media representations of national identities. Second, the project reviews the literature surrounding American military operations and the crucial role that they play in the presentation of American identities. Third, a more detailed plan of critical work is explored, calling attention to the importance of orchestrating diverse fragments of media representations produced by recent military operations as the central texts of analysis. The individual chapters are then previewed, examining how operations in Iraq, Somalia, and Kosovo provide understandings of these post-Cold War lessons. Ultimately, the case studies help critics draw larger conclusions about the transformations in the way American identity has been represented. Finally, the project explores the importance of these representations as the United States exits the historical period of the 1990s.

Military Discourse as Representations of National Identity

This project begins with the working assumption that war is a relatively unique event in that it allows a disparate collection of individuals to be represented as a

collective, even in contemporary times when identity politics appear to have broken down traditions of collective identities. Although wars are not the only national events that allow television viewers to participate "as part of an imagined audience specifically coded as American" (Sturken, p. 25), military conflicts remain defining moments in the history of nations, especially for the United States. Geoffrey Perret contends that, "America's wars have been like the rungs on a ladder by which it rose to greatness" (p. 34). For Perrett and many others, bearing witness to military triumphs remains one of the most important experiences in the determination of what it means to 'be an American.'

William Gibson, for example, contends that a long record of military victories allows Americans to expect international success as an important element of their past and present (p. 10). The American Revolution, a righteous cause to resist the unjust authority of the British monarchy situates a young nation as the world's bastion of freedom, the shining city on the hill that Ronald Reagan evoked some two hundred years after its founding. Richard Slotkin (1998) argues that the long string of victories, begun by George Washington, provides the cultural archetype for the righteousness of American intentions and foundation for its subsequent successes. The twin foundations of moral supremacy and success allow Americans to become the citizens of a just and noble nation, where might and right exist in concert. Once defined as a nation of fundamental goodness, America continues to occupy its 'unique role' in the world as it pursues its foreign policies. This project looks at the discourse of that unique role in an effort to reveal what it is expressed as 'being an American' during these contemporary conflicts.

As each operation moves from present to past, it becomes an individual volume to be sorted and placed among the many episodes in American history. Slotkin argues that the process of transforming seminal events into powerful cultural stories mirrors the society that speaks them (p. 5), allowing a community to define its relationship to its own past. War has always possessed a tremendous resonance in this regard because it speaks to a nation's aspirations and its greatest challenges. The process of transforming military conquests into tales of national identity appears as old as the practice of war itself. Joseph Campbell details the long history of twin tales in which life itself is either exemplified or denied by warfare (p. 170) and situates two of the most famous pieces of Western literature, the Old Testament and the *Iliad*, as "the two greatest works of war mythology" (p. 174).

Although the manner in which audiences engage these texts may be as varied as the audiences themselves, this study encourages an examination of the production of the contours of the imagined community. In contemporary America, the production and transmission of these individual stories as items of popular consumption occurs from the indivisible union of media and official channels of information. The retelling of historical events functions concurrently with editorial demands to translate events into stories; the event must be reduced into 'news' through a series of linguistic shortcuts, such as metaphor. These metaphors, once literalized by their acceptance, become a set of symbols to be used without overt reference to the original story. This process is important for examining warfare because Americans have now experienced the prototypes of

'good' and 'bad' wars in the contemporary era. Vietnam spoke to the dangers of engaging in an open-ended commitment without strong domestic unity, while the Gulf War demonstrated that both of these problems could be resolved if the war was waged appropriately.

To produce these popularized extremes, several decades of cultural expressions have served as sites of struggles for the 'lessons' of war. No communication medium has escaped the reconsideration of American war strategy, whether it takes the form of press pool regulations, cinematic depictions of war heroes, or images of veterans returning home to a grateful nation. Slotkin's work lays the foundation for examining cultural change through societies' own productions. He contends the political struggles of the 20th century utilized the genres of mass cultures as common sites for controversy (p. 24). In these moments of change, the symbols and structures become reference points for efforts to make sense of a particular period (p. 32).

In order to examine the ways in which the legacy of American identity is altered and updated in the coverage of contemporary conflicts, the essay examines strategies for each event in order to elucidate how these dimensions of Americanness are represented. John Carlos Rowe and Rick Berg argue that a central tenet of being a superpower has been the ability to explain itself and the world in American terms (p. 13). As the leader of the First World, the head of the liberal family of democracies, the United States is understood in relation to such images as 'monarchal Europeans', the 'exotic Orient' and 'tribal Africans.' News coverage provides a window to the production of these types of

international identity because it forces the clash of war to be succinctly described to the viewing public. The items that constitute these stories, the characters, nations, and their motives, all provide a way to examine what representations resonate within shared conceptions of Americanness.

In such an analysis, the representations present in news coverage must be considered as more than accidental or passing references to a conflict; they must be understood as complex constructions that help to position a news event within larger cultural narratives. Michael McGee argues that representations should be understood as group meanings because communities designate certain elements with particular meanings (p. 54-55). In times of war, the selection of certain representations function as compromises to past ideological struggles (Dorsey, 1995, p. 3). When news coverage describes the victims of war, for example, this effort should be understood as part of a tradition of depicting those who have already been described as 'undeserving' victims of earlier conflicts.

This project utilizes the coverage of military operations as the sites of these struggles because they offer the news media a practical opportunity to revisit the lessons of past conflicts. How, for example, should America's enemies be described? Do they warrant a level of comparison to the great evils of the past or do they more closely resemble the latter-day explanation of the Vietnamese, who fought to protect their homelands? Each decision, each representation performs a compromise between what has occurred and what current conceptions of Americanness embraces. Looking at those

conflicts as foreign policy crises, when the justifications for America's role in the world are most likely to evolve and reflect new realities, allows critics to examine how news events can be understood in the context of larger cultural schemas.

In order to examine the role that the discourse of military operations plays in the production of national identity, it is necessary to examine the dislocations produced by the Vietnam War and the attempted corrective of the war against Iraq. The frustrations of Vietnam became a symbolic container for those disenchanted with the future of the United States. Fred Turner explains that,

> The war was a sponge, sucking up issues of race and poverty, class and age, issues that had their own long and independent lives in American culture, and making them a single challenge to American myth (p. 31).

If America could lose a war, particularly to a smaller, less technologically advanced, less wealthy nation, then the other elements of national identity were open to revision. If America could lose, and lose in a way that weakened its case as a moral leader, then it seemed to foreclose the hope of the full integration of all its citizens. If the American economy could be so weakened by this war, could it ever really provide the kind of economic opportunities that might allow everyone to reach for the American dream of individual prosperity?

This project will discuss how defeat is commodified and explained as the province of particular groups or circumstances. Blame for the defeat in Vietnam commonly fell on the civilian leadership and the media, two groups that would need to reexamine their roles before America once again ventured into battle. The media's

extraordinary freedom to report from the front-lines of Vietnam and its desire to play a 'watchdog' function became understood as a desire to inhibit the war effort (Hallin, p. 6). This position contends that if only the media were to limit their coverage of stories that could be interpreted as American setbacks, such as the Tet Offensive, American troops could go about the business of winning the war. This position has maintained its vitality, despite the work of Peter Braestrup (1994) and Daniel Hallin (1986) who contend that factors much larger than media coverage of controversial events ultimately weakened public confidence in the war

At the core of this view, indecisive civilian leadership failed to provide the American military with the means to win the war. As the military waged this 'limited' effort, it was constantly under fire from the media as they blamed the military for mistakes that were the responsibility of the civilian leadership. Sturken argues that the tremendous sympathy garnered by the plight of Vietnam Veterans in the 1980s and 1990s is a result of their status as popular victims of an incompetent military establishment and a divided home front. The clear logic is that America did not, could not, lose in Vietnam because of the Vietnamese; the blame must instead reside within particular elements of America society. To accept otherwise would be to legitimate the view that American might, underwritten by its moral legitimacy, was not the supreme political force in the world. In this context, the perceived loss of American righteousness in Vietnam, personified by revelations of the My Lai massacre, provided one of its most disturbing lessons (Turner, p. 33). Gibson argues that this domestic betrayal theory dominated

American views of the war's lessons and became "widely accepted" by the 1980s (p. 27-28), reinforced again by President Reagan's inaugural message that Americans would never again be asked to fight such a restrained war.

These lessons of Vietnam may have altered, but did not substantially undermine the traditional American role as a force for good in the international arena. As Slotkin argues, if traditional elements were to survive the defeat, popular conceptions of American identity would need to be rearticulated in light of Vietnam (p. 12). Gibson correctly notes that instead of reformulating the core principles of American internationalism, post-Vietnam representations experienced a renaissance as the nation sought to return to its moral foundations (p. 26). Defeat did not provide a repudiation of the central legitimacy of America's role in the world; it instead isolated weaknesses in American political culture, weaknesses that would need to reevaluated before America could return to international prominence. Understanding the war became a project of revisiting political identity so as to make sense of defeat, as Sturken notes,

> The Vietnam War is no longer a definite event so much as it is a collective and mobile script in which we continue to scrawl, erase, rewrite our conflicting and changing view of ourselves (p. 86).

The movement from Vietnam to post-Vietnam America remained littered with efforts to heal the wounds of the war, usually through 'patching up' the conventional view of American identity (Berg & Rowe, p. 10). It became necessary to explain how American motives and actions could once again rise to the level of unassailable, such as the good war of World War II, where the cause was just and the course of action clear.

Haunted by the metaphorical maladies of the Vietnam syndrome, American culture longed for that simpler period of American prosperity and righteousness. This helps to explain the prominence of 1980s Vietnam War films that, for the most part, failed to offer a direct political critique as much as they valorized the individual American solider and offered the audience the possibility of redemption (Sturken, p. 113).

A return to this view of the world would require that America's enemies fade behind the dominance of American military might. The return of American military prowess remains central to this view. Much as the Vietnamese mostly appear as an "absent presence" that provided a scene of American intervention in prominent representations (Vlastos, p. 54), America would eventually need another moment to reclaim its weakened masculinity and ultimate sense of purpose. President Ronald Reagan spent nearly a decade attempting to rehabilitate America's wounded self-image, but it fell to his vice president, George H.W. Bush, to fight the war to undo Vietnam, a war whose singularity of purpose would be matched only by reports of its unqualified success.

A tremendous body of work has been devoted to the Gulf War because it appeared to redefine the nature of warfare and in the process, return America to a golden age of supremacy. As the inaugural display of American foreign policy in the nascent post-Cold War period, the Gulf War was advertised as an opportunity to take advantage of the Reagan era military buildup to move past the mistakes of Vietnam, past the doubt and uncertainty that littered the American cultural landscape. In popular representations,

American motives were pure and the military would be given a 'free hand' to win the war. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August of 1990 provided a clear violation of international law and a moment when American actions could be understood as clear and necessary to the cause of peace and, in effect provide "a new ending for the Vietnam War" (Sturken, p. 122).

Significantly, despite the dramatic American victory, lingering concerns plagued the dominant cultural narrative. Even as Bush proudly proclaimed that, "the specter of Vietnam has been buried forever in the desert sands of the Arabian peninsula" (Morrison, p. 2600), economic problems at home and an awkward conclusion in Iraq prevented the war from successfully replacing Vietnam's problems as dominant tropes. The process of undoing the Vietnamization of American political culture proved substantially more challenging than destroying the Iraqi military. This project argues that the Gulf War, while failing to 'erase' Vietnam, helped to redefine the cultural norms surrounding America routines of experiencing war.

By analyzing significant operations in the following decade, this project revisits the norms established by the Gulf War and examines the new wrinkles of this national identity. Even without driving Saddam Hussein from power, the Persian Gulf War demonstrated that precision weapons could successfully substitute for American troops on the battlefield and as primary agents in news coverage. The availability of a number of sophisticated and unmanned weapons systems, most notably cruise missiles, allowed America to experience "risk-free warfare," (Ignatieff, p. 168) where American troops

were used only to complete those limited missions initiated by advanced technology. This model of military operations, where success came without substantial risks to American personnel, was quickly accepted as the norm for future operations. In this way, the lingering specter of the body bags returning home from Vietnam could be avoided. If a highly mediated culture would not support the traditional form of military operations and the attendant casualty rates, then these new rules of engagement could provide perfection through "techno war" (Franklin, p. 42).

These accounts of American success embrace a deeply rooted narrative that positions American technological superiority as a testament to its cultural prowess. The use of distance weapons was not new, but their presence as the primary public images of the war provided a clear example of how America had 'learned' from Vietnam (Sturken, p. 131). Cruise missiles and stealth bombers provide evidence that America is once again the most dominant nation in the world, capable of waging war without threatening its own people. Iraqi casualties also disappeared from mainstream coverage. Daniel Hallin notes how news coverage emphasized that "targets" had been destroyed instead of references to the numbers of Iraqis killed (p. 55), part of larger effort to avoid measurements of the human toll, like body counts. With "triumphant technology" as a primary explanation of the Gulf War's successes, whatever remaining weaknesses must still reside elsewhere. Much as 'lessons' of Vietnam influenced how the Gulf War would be covered, the Gulf War continued to revise the popular agenda for future operations.

Perspectives on Military Discourse

The challenge inherent in studying mediated representations of military operations is to tease out how contested interpretations of past conflicts come to reside in representations of why wars are fought, who is responsible for leading the war effort, and who stands against the United States. Before detailing how this project conducts that analysis, I turn to examine the body of work that analyzes the discourse of American military operations. This project looks at three prominent themes in the coverage of military operations: how they are initially justified, how support for operations is maintained, and how the conclusions of operations are understood. This section reviews the scholarly literature relevant to all three areas and looks forward toward the contributions that the larger project can make in these areas.

Why Do We Intervene? Constituting the Enemy

The presence of the enemy is among the most fundamental elements of warfare. Symbolically, the enemy provides the embodiment of all that society opposes and allows the nation to unify in opposition. Gibson contends that, without the enemy, traditional conceptions of society or heroism would not exist (p. 65). The essence of constituting the enemy in this sense is to provide texture to the justification of military force against a nation or group. Beyond simply developing an enemy, the process of justifying deadly force requires an appeal that corresponds to the danger facing America or American interests. Determining danger is a process that forces a close examination of another's

actions, their motives and their geopolitical importance. Many potential threats exist at any given time, but only certain situations rise to the level of warranting military action. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the dominant media narratives explained the events as the beginning of regional conquest and thus Saddam Hussein could be understood as thirsty for land and power. The Truman administration similarly characterized the North Korean invasion of South Korea as more than an internal conflict, it represented a direct challenge from the Soviet Union (Sherry, p. 178). In these depictions, actions assume primary importance as a means of understanding intentions. In both cases, an incident is interpreted as a crucial moment where swift American action must prevent a catastrophic shift in the international balance of power. Analyzing how these actions are temporally constructed can help reveal a great deal about what America prioritizes as worthy enough to risk the lives of its own soldiers or at least its technology.

Critics have determined that these descriptions often follow similar patterns. Gibson noted that in popular culture representations of enemies, they " . . . closely resemble one another. They all commit the same evil crimes for the same perverted reasons" (p. 68). Robert Ivie has examined these patterns in American war discourse and argued that the nation's long history contains a relatively uniform vocabulary of motives, or images that justify such conflict (1974, p. 340). One of the most pronounced strains of argument, he contends, is the topoi of savagery, because it allows the nation to perform the ritual of victimage by exploring images of a savage enemy (1980, p. 292). Ivie and Slotkin (p. 12) each agree that the presence of 'savage war' of American cultural history

defines warfare as a form of blood feud between nations or cultural groups and enemies are drawn from this blood lust.

Ivie contends that the decivilizing vehicles found in America's pro-war discourse help to normalize the process of enemy construction and concludes that the trope of force remains the most understandable and popular method of literalizing the metaphor of savagery (1994, p. 277). As these depictions provide sufficient evidence of the metaphorical presence of an enemy, it supports an evolution into deeply rooted tales of savagery. These larger tales requires the particular acts of savagery to resonate within past experiences.

Savagery alone, however, does not warrant the use of military force. History is replete with examples of violent acts of aggression that were not deemed threatening to America and thus not worthy of being repelled by force. During the Cold War, the geopolitical importance of a region had little correlation with its status as a moral crisis. The patterns of persuasion that marked the Cold War provided a foundation for a broad range of appeals in American political discourse that defined the ways in which peoples and nations were viewed (Scott, p. 12-13). If the South African system of apartheid and the abuses of military government in El Salvador could be defined and handled as political matters, then different criteria must be used to evaluate how savagery becomes a crisis worthy of military action.

This process became even more complicated without the Soviet Union to anchor the development of American foreign policy. Without an 'orientationial metaphor' of the

Cold War, presidents attempted to justify their foreign policies, and their military actions, with hybrid forms of narrative that emphasized varying combinations of New World Order imperatives, Cold War moralism, and the politics of American self-interest (Stuckey, p. 225). This shift corresponds with an increasing sensitivity toward diversity, both at home and abroad. As representations of enemies move away from overt use of race as means of depicting evil, more subtle strategies emerged, frequently under the banner of 'instability' (Gibson, p. 72-73). James Der Derian argues that sensitivity to international politics has reduced the traditional list of dangerous nations, once labeled as rogues, into something amorphous, known as 'states of concern' (p. 101).

Through these diverse efforts, Ivie's observation that military discourse functions in similar patterns encourage critics to look more closely at the nature of these justifications. In each case savagery is amplified by an irreparable moment, a situation where the absence of action condemns society to further violence. Robert Cox contends that examining a claim in light of its urgency highlights the irreversible nature of action and narrows the spectrum of available options (p. 229). This helps to explain that, even though international violence appears prevalent, American military force is only called upon in very particular circumstances.

Without the threat of Soviet expansionism, rhetorical experiments would have to articulate the new standards that elevate savagery into a threat to American interests. The exigence of transforming atrocity into national interest helps to explain the preponderance of appeals that utilize analogies to the Second World War. Without the

ability to appeal to a universal religious icon, this irrevocable moment often contains a secular expression of evil and the Nazi-like regimes have been the closest approximation (Hume, p. 71). Comparing a new crisis to the Holocaust places that event in a context where massive human suffering threatened national security and required decisive military force. Despite the difficulties inherent in measuring most violent acts in human history, the Holocaust narrative narrows debate by concluding this particular brand of savagery cannot be ignored, or it will only spread.

American popular culture is littered with heroes who face their own version of this moment. They face evil and ultimately must take up arms because they are left without an alternative. The urgency of their personal crises represents the belief that Americans desire only peace, but cannot ignore violence committed against others. As popular culture attempted to reassert a new masculinity after Vietnam, a number of popular heroes reached that crucial moment and embrace violence as their only redemptive strategy (Gibson, p. 5). Clint Eastwood's gunfighters and police officers faced this decision and in each film, his character killed evil men because it was the only way to prevent their dangerous behavior. Charles Bronson's *Death Wish* films demonstrate that when a peaceful man's family is murdered he can only rely on himself to seek retribution. Similarly, Stallone's Rambo, who begins the series wanting only to locate friends and attempt to develop a quiet life, must return to war-like ways to protect himself and the honor of his nation. The heroism of these characters operates to reinforce

the importance of circumstances where only noble violence can stop and simultaneously provide a critical insight into the regenerative processes of masculinity.[2]

An important task for critics of the new operations is to examine what remains as representations move away from clearly rooted historical icons of evil and toward rejections of new cultural adversaries. As American society increasingly recognizes its own diversity, looking for nuances in the expressions of representations of enemies will require that scholars examine those representations that a diverse culture could uniformly reject. The irreparable moments of contemporary crises may very well involve those who stand in the way of greater diversity. This project will explore how complex constructions of gender and race will implicate contemporary efforts to construct enemies.

How Do We Sustain Support? Rationales For Military Action

The urgency of American action is a central component in traditional war rhetoric. After cataloging the long history of American military actions, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson argue that presidents justify the need for intervention through a particular dramatic narrative of American agency, which allows individual defenses of the policy to be extracted (p. 107). Much as Franklin Roosevelt once called the nation to action as a response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, George Bush defined the Gulf War as an action to protect Kuwaiti democracy. In both cases, the elements of the narrative frame the necessary actors, events and motives in the call to arms. War discourse typically contains an understanding that the enemy must be removed

or destroyed so that the nation may return to normalcy. Gibson contends that this process allows a mirroring of hero and villain. The presence of these oppositional forces allows societies to understand themselves in relation to the crusade fought in their name (p. 77). In the above examples, the freedom of democratic nations becomes the contested terrain between the United States and the aggressor nations.

War, unlike other means of discourse between nations, requires confrontation. In the elaboration of American political culture, this confrontation is often reduced to a duel, where the champions of each side engage each other in combat to the death (Gibson, p. 77). Only through the destruction of the enemy can heroes liberate society and themselves from imminent danger. For Slotkin, the centrality of death explains why American culture requires affirmation only through vanquishing an enemy or regeneration through violence (p. 12). Slotkin differentiates the American experience with violence from that of other cultures not because of the kind of violence valorized, but because of the significance assigned to such experiences (p. 13). This need for victory helps to inform Campbell and Jamieson's discussion of the importance of presidential war narratives. Unanimity of purpose is necessary because the adversary "must be thwarted at all costs" (109). The nation must act as one, through their hero, if they are to be successful and reap the symbolic benefits of that that victory.

This process may seem to function clearly in an era where nations fight large, total wars with full mobilization of their populaces, but how does this process function in an age where smaller operations are the norm? If America engages in a series of limited

conflicts, how can these be depicted as epic struggles between good and evil, with the survival of the nation in question? The effort to rename these operations has inspired a number of suggestions, including 'virtual wars' (Ignatieff), 'teacup wars' (Halberstam) and for some non-traditional efforts, an official Defense Department label, Operations Other Than War (OOTW).

The conflicts studied in this project failed to earn the moniker 'war' either from a legal or popular standpoint. Even as presidents refused to acknowledge the legality of the War Powers Act, its presence provided the presidents with sufficient legal authority to deploy armed forces without a formal mandate from the United States Congress. Korea and Vietnam, both were fought as undeclared wars, but their size and scope prevented them from being popularly valorized as wars. As these operations become media events, they are remembered by CNN graphics and operation names, such as Operation Desert Fox, or they become something short of war, such as the 'Strike Against Yugoslavia.' If, as McGee contends, war is an effort to cut off part of society (p. 43), then how large is the cultural incision of these smaller operations? This concern lingers throughout scholarship of military operations in the 1990s and poses an interesting challenge for discussions of enemy construction.

Critics note that routines of describing the enemy remain prevalent in a great deal of contemporary military discourse. Kellner describes the presence of a good vs. evil frame in media coverage of the Gulf War, which included a variety of allegations and historical analogies (1992, p. 62-63). Gibson views this campaign as an extension of

efforts to transfer past stereotypes of 'enemy' behavior to current conflicts (p. 71). Even if the strategies designed to demonize enemies take on familiar forms, how can these same strategies function when the enemy states largely remain intact and without changes in their top leadership?

This question is often overlooked in examinations of American military power. In the vast majority of recent American operations, the leaders that were presented as a threat to American interests continued to lead their nations *after* even 'successful' American operations. Despite all of the strategic advances the American military possessed, either these conflicts were not designed to remove the leaders or they were incapable of doing so. Either question poses a substantial problem for the narrative structure of American war appeals.

This project employs Paul Ricoeur's (1980) consideration of the differences between narrative time and temporality to analyze how conflicting standards for success are developed in each war appeal. As presidents find themselves torn between the need to fully otherize figures, like Saddam Hussein, Mohammed Aidid, and Slobodan Milosevic, and the need to articulate more achievable, their discourse often represents a complex mixture of both temporal strains. By distinguishing between temporal organizational patterns that rely on a clearly articulated beginning and endpoint and configurational appeals that emphasize the movement toward a goal, critics can more clearly examine how the goals of limited warfare present unique rhetorical challenges for military appeals.

How Do We Get Out? Representations of Defeat

As this chapter has argued, representations of American political identity have demonstrated a surprising resilience in the face in potential threats. The search for culpability in military defeats requires critics to examine where responsibilities currently reside. The betrayal theory of the Vietnam War recognizes that the American military was abandoned by many other critical elements of society. Politicians demanded success under impossible circumstances, the media used their access to the conflict to undercut domestic support and the public turned its back on the returning veterans (Turner, p. 192). All of these concerns find their way into representations of current conflicts; to win the 'next one' the military would need to prevent these unreliable partners from betraying those troops in the field.

In the post Vietnam era, the desirability of future involvement was often judged by a template that would make this loss of will impossible. The imposition of substantial restrictions on press access and the demand that all future operations be limited to achievable missions with public support narrowed the range of possible missions and allowed the military to operate on its own terms (Isaacs, pp. 73-73). These changes, however, failed to revise the answer about where responsibility for failed missions should reside. These restraints functioned in quite the opposite fashion; if not followed precisely, the historical legacy of what went wrong in Vietnam was all too easily recalled.

The contrasting representations of the noble grunt and the micromanaging bureaucrat provide an underutilized template to examine how defeat appears in popular

culture. Critics have noted the prominence of voices that echo Reagan's call that *someone* in our own government prevented our troops from winning (Vlastos, p. 68). Issacs, for example, quotes Vice Admiral and vice presidential nominee James Stockdale who described the civilian leadership of the Vietnam era as, "Those conscience-stricken pissants who ran our government" (p. 68). In this view, the demand of political leadership to make decisions including which targets to strike and which borders could be crossed, left the military operating under rules of engagement that could not produce a victory.

In this model, the military's sole culpability is found in their strict adherence to civilian authority. Had they been empowered to make these types of decisions, the full weight of American military power would have forced the North Vietnamese into submission. The cultural magnitude of this view cannot be underestimated. In the years after Vietnam, the idea that poor civilian planning was the single greatest flaw in America's war effort gained widespread popularity. Former President Richard Nixon argued that the Johnson's administration's unwillingness to embrace firmly a war footing foreclosed success, "It was a terrible dilemma for Johnson … He made the worst possible choice: He would fight – not to win, but only to lose" (1990, p. 186). Reagan's call for never constraining the military was echoed by a genre of movie superheroes, most notably John Rambo, who longed for an opportunity to fight Vietnam over as long as the incompetent civilians will stay out of the way. When recruited to return to Vietnam and rescue abandoned American POW's Rambo asks "Do we get to win this time?" (Lanning, p. 111). Pat Aufderheide notes the significance of the final orgy of violence that Rambo

inflicts in *Rambo: First Blood Part II,* "Rambo's ultimate triumph is as much over the corrupt bureaucracy as over the Vietnamese" (p. 107) as he destroys the headquarters of a CIA field office.

When President Bush famously pronounced that the Persian Gulf War would not be another Vietnam, he reinscribed the importance of civilian deference to military authorities in the planning and execution of a conflict. This would not be Vietnam because the military would make the critical decisions; General Norman Schwarzkopf would not have to fight for control with his president as his predecessors did in Vietnam. Significantly, much of this discourse leaves questions about personal culpability unanswered. Aufderheide argues that the noble grunt, the victim of the bureaucracy, is often contrasted with a barely recognizable mid-level bureaucrat (p. 91). This faceless culprit exists ready to be recalled when circumstances call for a scapegoat. This project explores the importance of closely detailing how, during those failures, civilian authorities are represented and how those representations undermine the principle of civilian control over the military.

Military Operations as Texts: A Critical Perspective

The dominance of war's impact on cultural forms can be felt in the diverse body of texts examined by critics. Popular films, serial television programs, news broadcasts, radio reports, presidential speeches and newspaper articles have served as sites of critical examination when describing how war produces political identity. The project argues that

an analysis of American political identity should embrace insights from a broad range of cultural texts in order to demonstrate the salience of certain strands of argument in mainstream news coverage of military operations. With the increasing homogenization of official federal and popular news discourse, future projects should embrace analysis of both as a means of understanding how media reports amplify the federal government's depiction of a crisis.

The Vietnam War cemented the importance of media coverage as an important site of cultural articulations. Although the belief that unlimited media coverage fatally weakened the American desire to prosecute the war has been extensively detailed,[3] the impact that the war had on the future of wartime reporting has yet to be fully synthesized in rhetorical scholarship. The perception of unfettered media access led to a series of experiments designed to produce a different balance between the rights of news organizations and the interests of national security (Skoco & Woodger, p. 79). Initial manifestations, such as the invasion of Grenada, utilized direct control almost exclusively, prohibiting the media from being in important battle areas and, in some cases, the entire theater of operations. Some of these means of information suppression continue, but military operations have increasingly recognized a role for the media as an extension of official efforts. These indirect forms concentrated on providing the media with a ready-made narrative for the conflict, complete with spectacular visual imagery. The success of Department of Defense briefings during the Persian Gulf War spurred similar efforts during the Kosovo conflict and encouraged media critics to contend that

governmental and media accounts of conflict can no longer be considered two distinct entities (Rabinovitz & Jeffords, p. 11).

Tom Englehart posits this synthesis of media and military operations, beginning with the Gulf War, as the advent of total television, a managerial means of public and private coproduction of media coverage with far-reaching consequences for the way America experiences war (p. 54). Burdened by financial demands to remain economically competitive and military restrictions on the primary sources of information, Englehart describes the major news organizations as cooperative partners in the government's effort to portray a sympathetic view of the nation's foreign policies and produce a "new form of media reality" (p. 82). Prominent former journalist and media critic Marvin Kalb concurs; reliance on official government channels of military information has weakened the journalistic standards of performance, especially as increasingly domestic-based reporters attempt to cover international events. As reporters embraced a "we vs. they form of dialogue" in the Gulf War, the prospect of a distinct media perspective disappeared (p. 6)

David Halberstam extends this criticism, arguing that the increasingly domestic focus of American news media sources has weakened the financial and editorial resources available to international news reporting (p. 160-161). Tim Allen contends that CNN's success with a cooperative media-governmental model for international affairs has become the standard for other media sources and ended the era of international investigative journalism in favor of a 'real-time' model (p. 38). Mirjana Skoco and William Woodger discuss the troubling implications of this hybrid public-private

communication channel, perhaps best demonstrated by NATO spokesperson Jamie Shea's boast that NATO had succeeded in occupying the "media space" reserved for covering the Kosovo conflict (p. 85).

By the 1990s, influencing the types of coverage that media organizations choose to employ has unquestionably become an essential component of military planning. General Wesley Clark, the former Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, argues that modern operations must be wary of the media. "The instantaneous flow of news and especially imagery could overwhelm the ability of governments to explain, investigate, coordinate and confirm" (p. 8). Pentagon officials often find particular correspondents, such as Wolf Blitzer and Christiane Amanpour, to blame for this 'CNN factor' in international decision-making.

Instead of utilizing this same divide between official government sources and 'independent' news reporters, critics should interrogate the role that these images play in the construction of the conflict's narratives, especially when media and military information increasingly mirror each other. This concern becomes even more pronounced with the resonance of media forms across mediums, so that Stephen Ambrose's heroic accounts of World War II and popular films like Saving Private Ryan and The Thin Red Line offers society a chance to revisit its memory of the Second World War. By the 1990s, the genres that divided news from documentary and from propaganda film blurred under the weight of real-time access to remote battlefields and increasingly strong

budgetary pressures on media organization and compel critics to adjust their textual analysis accordingly.

The influence and insights of public address studies of military conflicts should be incorporated alongside media analysis. A great deal of rhetorical scholarship explores largely presidential efforts to set the terms of public discourse of military operations and their legacies. Kenneth Zagacki, for example, explores the effort to "clean up" (p. 50) the post Vietnam experience through a presidential rhetoric of defeat and Robert McMahon examines the effort to rationalize American defeat by comparing the varying presidential performances of the post-war period. Dorsey embodies this line of scholarship in his mythic considerations of Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, particularly as he considers how Roosevelt influenced the media coverage through narrative tales of American victory (1997; 1995).

Mary Stuckey's contention that presidents experimented with a variety of rhetorical forms in the 1990s provides a useful reflection for contemporary work that fails to problematize the ways presidential foreign policy messages are complicated by complex media forms.[4] Dorsey concedes that contemporary presidents can no longer "exert the inartistic control of the media" common in TR's time," (1997, p. 463) but describes the need for further exploration of the artistic methods available to presidents. Gordon Mitchell details one such approach, analyzing George Bush's Gulf War rhetoric from the perspective of the president providing script control for the nation's media (p. 128). This essay embraces the method advocated by a number of critics to examine texts

across traditional boundaries (McMahon, p. 530; Carpenter, p. 2) and confront the complexities of media imagery utilizing the broadest selection of critical instruments. Recognizing the importance of presidential efforts to provide the script for media coverage, this project also calls for an understanding of the symbiotic nature of elite level and media discourse as fragments of a larger project of cultural reexamination. If we are trapped, as Ivie suggests, by the "tragic fear" that lingers as America attempts to "redeem itself by contesting the relentless forces of chaos and establishing a New World Order" (1996, p. 176), then critics must interrogate the perpetuation of those rhetorical forms wherever they persist.

Some media based criticism would argue that any such analysis would be rendered useless by the indecipherable nature of mediated representations. French critic Jean Baudrillard provides the primary opposition to such traditional analysis. He agitates critics by contending that the Gulf War would not and did not take place; instead it was hyperreal, a simulated experience or simulacrum, explaining that a hyper-mediated society had lost connection with experiential forms of knowledge. Baudrillard argues that modern warfare has lost much of its meaning because, "It is beholden not to have an objective but to prove its very existence" (p. 32) Paul Virilio similarly noted a foundational change in the symbolic nature of war, locating an important distinction through the controlling force of pace or time. If the acceleration of temporal change moves from simply an element of any representation toward a controlling term, such as that of place, where it both defines the object itself and the rationale for movement, the

conflict must also define itself as it moves through daily coverage. The implications of such change are as sweeping as they are troubling, leading to, "the feeling that we're faced with an epoch in which the real world and our image of the world no longer coincide" (Der Derian, 119).

As a remedy, James Der Derian calls for a 'virtual theory of war,' one "that can explore *how* reality is seen, framed, read, and generated in the conceptualization of the event" (p. 217). This project offers support toward that goal by providing case studies of public discourse, both from the mass media and prominent public figures, of three military operations in the 1990s and treats the representations of those conflicts as an attempt to understand how these works constitute a 'reality' of how America understands itself. Recognizing Halberstam's observation that America functions relatively 'normally' even in these moments of crisis, the project looks toward the discursive practices that provide the legitimacy for American action. Much as Mitchell seeks to break down the military's ability to dominate the communicative frame of the success of the Patriot missile, this project recognizes that a transformative potential exists in the ability to work with, and through, the hyperreal frames that surround military operations. As the project explores the representations of war discourse, it is important to utilize such concerns about of the challenge of the hyperreal, while embracing their contingent nature and take up Richard Harvey Brown's call, to "exploit the tensions" (p. 7) of these practices.

By considering the play between conflicting elements of representations, this project attempts to determine what values are deemed important for a society attempting to manage its diversity. Other critics, notably Campbell and Jamieson, have described some of these tensions in light of their historical accuracy (p. 107). Their emphasis on the 'actual' representation forces critics to wait, perhaps indefinitely, for Freedom of Information Requests to be granted or for interesting details to be included in an autobiography.[5] Although the project includes claims about the authenticity of some appeals, it does not concentrate on delivering historical verdicts of particular representations because the representations are valuable symbols of what constitutes a privileged reading of Americanness.

As these military crises occur, critics need to explore their constituent elements as tools to help explore what has been produced and what failed to resonate. Michael McGee's discussion of representations calls for an understanding of representations as distinct from mere signs; we return to his notion of representations as shared understandings of cultural expressions (p. 54). In each of the case studies, the analysis highlights prominent representations of why and how the American military stands in for the broader community. These discussions will examine how the discourse of these operations acts upon the world and helps to constitute our shared understanding of cultural expressions (Fiske, p. 4-5). Asking 'who is responsible', why 'we' fight, and whom 'we' choose to engage on the field of battle can provide answers as to the constitution of contemporary American identity(ies).

At the heart of all of these questions, this project also considers what role 'we' are given. One of the most contentious disputes among critics of the new wars remains the role of the audience at home.[6] Are they spectators in a life and death version of a sporting event or are they written out of the script, nonparticipatory agents in a virtual spectacle? By attempting to answer these questions in the context of individual themes, rather than as a unified whole, representational analysis can add insight to this conversation.

Military Operations in the 1990s: Previewing the Case Studies

The three case studies provide opportunities to examine the evolving discourse of American military operations in the 1990s. Far from being exclusive examples of the deployment of American military force, each operation was selected because it offers a different perspective on the aforementioned questions of national identity. Although these operations may not appear as seminal events in American history, the battles in Iraq, Somalia, and Kosovo provide valuable tests for critics to explore.

The first case study examines how support for operations can be developed without reference to communism. By examining the accusations of gender-based violence in Kosovo during 1999 the chapter considers how threats to women are represented as a rationale for military action, emphasizing the importance of allegations of rape camps in Kosovo. Building upon the legacy of gendered appeals in earlier conflicts, this section explores the importance of more inclusive appeals for military action. Susan Brownmiller's work is examined to help consider a dichotomy in the

representations of gender-based violence, where crimes are alternately ignored if committed by the 'wrong side' or glorified as examples of the repulsive character of the enemy. This chapter places Kosovo in the broader context of how military conflicts redefine notions of masculinity and how gendered appeals function as a means of promoting national unity in times of crisis.

The second case study turns to the dilemma of continuing public support for a long-term military operation. By examining the American military operations in the Persian Gulf after the conclusion of the 1991 Gulf War, this chapter explores how the Clinton administration attempted to explain and justify its operations against Iraq, even as they appeared unable or unwilling to develop a foreign policy that would remove Saddam Hussein from power. This section explores the importance of the Clinton effort to confront the 'lessons' of past operations that require the quick and decisive vanquishing of one's enemy.

This case study argues that the promulgation of a new form of logic, constructing a permanent enemy, helped to justify military action in an environment of military 'crisis' while simultaneously keeping the entire issue on war-like footing. Building upon Paul Ricoeur's conceptions of narrative time, this section explores the conflicts of chronologically and topically based interpretations of foreign policies. This interpretation can offer insight into how a permanent frame of war discourse can normalize military action.

The final case study confronts how American national identity is produced in moments when America must hastily withdraw from a military operation. An examination of the American military operation in Somalia, focusing on the October 1993 raid that culminated in a violent confrontation between Somali and American forces and left eighteen American Rangers dead, provides an opportunity to examine how questions of responsibility are represented. This chapter acknowledges the tremendous import of visual imagery in helping to produce the lessons of this operation, but it also looks toward the implications of largely blaming the failure on civilian authorities.

This chapter attempts to add a new perspective to the ongoing debate over the health of the norm of civilian control over the armed forces by exploring the importance of assigning Secretary of Defense Les Aspin as the primarily responsible party, especially as his masculinity was represented in contrast to that of the quintessential military hero, General Colin Powell. Rather than follow a substantial trend that embraces Somalia as another example of the 'CNN effect' where images drive policy, this chapter looks toward the importance of placing of responsibility as a frame that produces the meaning of these events.

Conclusion

This project explores a historical period that began with the collapse of America's mortal enemy and ended with a massive attack on American soil. This intervening decade should be examined as a time when the United States, largely unencumbered by the demands of a hot or cold war, revisited how it was to be represented on the world stage.

By exploring how a unitary view of what 'Americans' believed was important enough to launch or sustain an operation, we can begin to see how the lessons that evolved from Vietnam and the Gulf War continue to undergo revision. By exploring how 'Americans' deal with defeat, we can also begin to appreciate how culpability for these operations plays an important role in future operations.

This project is historical, yet it is haunted by the presence of America's new war. These lessons, tested out in the relatively risk-free post-Cold War pre-War on Terror period are undergoing daily revision as American forces are deployed around the globe. As Americans once again turn to traditional symbols of patriotism, the importance of examining representations of a national identity appears increasingly essential if we are to understand how these mediated conflicts define questions of support, success, and defeat.

This provides both a challenge and an opportunity for this project. If the central thesis of the essay can be supported, that mediated representations of military news function to redefine America's representations of its political identity, then critics may be provided with another useful perspective to examine our new reality. Most importantly, this project can be viewed as complicating the notion that America moved in a straight line from Vietnam to the Gulf War to Afghanistan. The 1990s may be viewed as a period of economic boom or the end of innocence, but it must also be looked at as the ground in which America revisited its most fundamental visions of itself in a series of conflicts.

CHAPTER 2

JUSTIFYING KOSOVO

Introduction

If the 1991 Persian Gulf War represented the beginning of this unique period of American military operations, then the intervention in Kosovo, formally named Operation Allied Force, was its most dramatic success. When the United States and its NATO allies launched the operation in the spring of 1999, it was hailed as a revolutionary military campaign launched not for selfish reasons of realpolitik, but because the humanitarian crisis was too important to ignore. Throughout the tremendous media coverage, NATO and U.S. officials argued for the humanitarian imperative justifying action, supported by President Bill Clinton's contention that decisive action in Kosovo was a "moral imperative" (March 24, 1999).

This chapter examines the public discourse and media coverage of Operation Allied Force as an important example of how justifications for military action were developed in the post-Cold War political environment of the 1990s. This chapter focuses on the coverage of violence against Kosovar women as a central justification for NATO military action and explores its importance for constructing contemporary views of American identity and masculinity. Even though these subjects have individually received a great deal of attention, the intersection between representations of gendered

violence and justifications for military action remain an underdeveloped sphere of rhetorical scholarship.

In order to examine their nexus, the chapter first examines how changes in the articulation of a unified national identity implicates the evolving genre of war rhetoric, particularly with regard to masculine identities. The representations of wartime gendered violence found in the Kosovo coverage are then investigated, with specific attention to prominent strategies. The chapter concludes with an examination of the particular strategies, both for the deployment of military force and the nature of gendered identities, including a call to assess more critically the standards for progress in the prevention of gendered violence.

Gendered Identities as Justifications for War

This chapter contends that the representations of gendered identities play a powerful role in the construction of appeals in favor of military action. The role of women in wartime has been a contentious subject for military historians. Although many accounts traditionally overlooked women's roles, except as bystanders, more recent scholarship has begun to complicate our understandings of how questions of gender are relevant to military history, particularly with regard to acts of sexual violence or, more specifically, gendered violence. Susan Brownmiller's groundbreaking work, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, challenged a number of popular misconceptions about rape, and although concluding that throughout history "rape remains unmentionable even in

war," (1975, p. 40) there were moments when rape was not only mentioned, but also advertised as proof of the barbarity of another nation.

In the 20th century, there were several such moments. After the 1914 German invasion of Belgium, a media campaign depicted the Germans as "depraved Boche" and provided the Allied nations with a persuasive technique to rally hesitant Americans behind the war effort, while putting the "The Rape of the Hun" into international lexicons (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 43-44). Americans also became familiar with the disturbing accounts of forced rape camps in World War II and the Japanese siege of the Chinese mainland introduced the 'rape of' Nanking to popular culture (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 53). Several decades later, the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait extended this trope by contending that the crimes committed against Kuwaiti citizens constituted the "rape of Kuwait" (Shohat, 1994, p. 153). In these cases, the rapes themselves become symbolic of the larger pattern of brutality visited by these militaristic societies.

This treatment of wartime gendered violence differs dramatically from reports of American atrocities. During the Vietnam War, for example, media reports systematically underreported rape by rarely declaring it newsworthy (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 87) and when it was mentioned, it was understood as an aberration or an unfortunate byproduct of the horror of war. This understanding was displayed in the 1989 Brian De Palma film, *Casualties of War*, where the violence of American servicemen Sean Penn was remedied by the integrity and determination of Michael J. Fox to have his fellow troops prosecuted for their sexual assault and murder of a Vietnamese woman.

Even after the 1971 Winter Soldiers investigation brought numerous cases of American atrocities to public attention, popular films depicted these incidents as the result of emotionally and sexually frustrated American servicemen, not as part of any larger social structure or military directive (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 107-108; Stuhldreher, 1994). Mary Ann Tetreault argues that the distinction between these explanations should be understood as the politicization of rape, whereby nations manipulate the strategic environments of public opinion by encouraging retaliation against those who violated a nation's women (2001, p. 468). The representations from Kosovo occur in such a climate.

This strategic utilization of gendered violence can serve as a useful addition to the scholarship of Robert Ivie, who has identified that identifying and exploring the culpability of the enemy is a central means of redeeming peaceful values. With a plausible scapegoat, one that can be articulated through the topoi of savagery (1980, p. 278), presidents can present the argument that the brutal actions of another have left America without alternatives. Without a Soviet threat this orientationial metaphor of savagery withered, the necessity of reformulating justifications and blending Cold War rhetorical forms with new contexts and new actors may lead presidents to consider justifications that more closely correspond to the current body politic (Entman, 2000, p. 11; Stuckey, 1995, p. 214-15). This chapter briefly describes the history of the Kosovo operation before exploring dimensions of masculinity as one such line of argument.

NATO Military Operations in Kosovo and the Former Yugoslavia

The reports of a dramatically deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Republic of Kosovo in late 1998 and early 1999 accentuated the pressure on Western leaders to take some aggressive course of action (Judah, 2000, 233). Inside the Yugoslavian controlled Republic of Kosovo, media reports indicated that the Kosovar Albanians found themselves engaged in a worsening cycle of resistance and persecution with the ruling Serbs. The increasing violence recalled images of the atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose peace deal specifically avoided a settlement of the contentious Kosovar question (Judah, 2000, 84).

Despite international pressure, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic refused to concede the historically important territory of Kosovo to any international authority. Perceiving a lack of palatable alternatives, the NATO alliance, led by the United States, began aerial combat operations on March 24, 1999 at 8:00 p.m. local time (Judah, 2000, 237). The way in which the three-month campaign unfolded surprised both critics and supporters alike.

The importance of the humanitarian justification for action cannot be understated. Although NATO and the United States argued that the pervasive human suffering justified action, the lack of international aggression prevented traditional legal arguments for intervention. The Serbs crossed no internationally recognized borders and thus were not subject to the same formal mechanisms of international law, as for example, Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait one decade earlier (Independent International Commission on

Kosovo, 171). The suffering of Kosovar Albanians by their technically legitimate authority provided the Alegal cover needed to go to war@ (Judah, 2000, 233).

Perhaps unparalleled in contemporary military warfare, the United States fought the conflict almost entirely with aerial operations.[7] NATO launched over 37,000 sorties, nearly a third of all those launched in the Second Persian Gulf War (Cordesman, 18). While the operation produced no casualties among the American pilots, the aerial operations left the Serbian ground forces in control of ground-based operations and they engaged in a concerted effort to expel the Albanian population from their homes and into neighboring Albania and Macedonia (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 88).

Despite the NATO goal of preventing humanitarian suffering, Serbian operations attempted to ensure, by force, that any post-war Kosovo would only include Serbian citizens (Judah, 2000, 240-1). Post-war assessments concurred with media reports during the conflict; NATO and the United States failed to consider the implications of such an increase in terrorizing operations among the domestic populace. Anthony Cordesman argues, AIt also seems clear that at least 80% of the people NATO attempted to protect suffered grievously during the war@ (51). The international community's lack of contingency planning complicated the humanitarian crisis of the refugees and the "wave of humanity" pouring in from Kosovo overwhelmed international relief organizations (Mertus, 2000, 44). Without any warnings to humanitarian organizations or any available ground combat troops, NATO, "failed to achieve its avowed aim of preventing massive

ethnic cleansing" (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 5). The effort to mount a public relations response to this disaster provides the subject for this analysis.

Media Representations of Gendered Violence

As the Albanian Kosovars fled their homes, they narrated stories of the Serbian violence to Western journalists. These accounts, often combined with editorial comments from NATO's spokespeople, attracted attention from newspapers and television stations around the world. Rape figured prominently in the commentary of many media outlets, beginning with the dozens of stories reporting on the violence in the waning days of March 1999.[8]

Throughout the voluminous coverage, three dominant strategies emerged. First, the media established the magnitude of the violence as a necessary component of the crisis. Second, the representations utilized compelling historical narratives to transform the Serbs into a more familiar evil. Finally, the coverage emphasized the subhuman character of the racialized 'other,' a Balkan identity responsible for the violence. The collective weight of these concerns weakened potential claims about the advances made in wartime coverage of gendered violence and articulated a masculinity that reinscribed dominant relationships with women and racial minorities.

The process of transmitting the rape allegations cannot be understood without examining the public commentary of NATO and United States' officials. NATO was not able to control the ground conflict, but it remained responsible for publicly defending

their efforts to protect the Albanian Kosovar population. After the troubled first week of the air operations, complete with continued human suffering, NATO dramatically increased the human and material resources available to its press organizations in order, "to mount a full-time information counter-offensive," an effort that led a BBC documentary to conclude that "the war was won by being spun" (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000, p. 216). The subsequent NATO campaign became a case study in amplification, the rhetorical technique of selecting language forms and extending them, both quantitatively and qualitatively, so that the character of the form is enhanced to the viewer (Lanham, 1991, p. 8; Plett, 2001, p. 25).

NATO media briefings provided a clear narrative of humanitarian atrocities and amplified that depiction by providing historical reference points as well as quantitative accounts of the crisis. Jamie Shea provided reporters with the historical frame that doubled as a ready made sound bite when he argued that, "we are now on the brink of a major humanitarian disaster the likes of which we have not seen in Europe since the closing days of the Second World War" (Urquhart, 1999). By late March, U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin provided this account of events that brought the rape charges within the emerging narrative,

> Let me say that, clearly, some terrible, terrible things are going on in Kosovo. We're talking about forced expulsions. We're talking about rape. We're talking about mass murder. We're talking about hundreds of thousands of people being moved out of their homes. It's a terrible, terrible thing. Crimes against humanity are occurring, and there are indications that genocide is occurring (Suarez, 1999).

Despite describing the actions as genocidal, a legal term of art, Rubin admitted that "I just don't have any confirmation of it" in the same day's press briefing (Rubin, 1999). By April ninth, the United Stated Defense Department, through spokesman Kenneth Bacon, released reports of the existence of rape camps in southwestern Kosovo. *The Washington Post* published this account of the press conference,

> … U.S. officials had received reports of an even more ghastly crime of mass rape followed by executions. "We're getting some very disturbing reports . . . that young Kosovar women are being herded into a Serb army training camp near the town of Djakovica, which is in southwest Kosovo, where they are being raped by troops," (Loeb & Smith, 1999).

Bacon, like Rubin, acknowledged that these reports were unconfirmed, but noted that the single source of the accounts was reliable and that "the report was given added credibility because it fit the pattern of mass rapes by Serbian soldiers during the Bosnian conflict" (Perlez, 1999). Although *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* noted the lack of confirmation for both accounts, they embraced the routine of using the 30,000 Bosnian rapes as background for the current allegations and therefore helped to support the larger argument, that military action against Serbia remained necessary. A separate article from the same day's, April tenth, *The Washington Post* acknowledged the utility of such a strategy,

> The administration launched a new rhetorical offensive yesterday against the Serb-led Yugoslav government, accusing its soldiers of systematically raping and murdering ethnic Albanian women in Kosovo . . . The reports have been used in part to explain and solicit public support for the escalating NATO bombing campaign . . . (Lancaster & Graham, 1999).

While again admitting the lack of confirmation, *The Post* both recognized the utility of such accounts and, through its own coverage, further disseminated this perspective to a wider audience. Even without confirmation, the charge of rape was repeatedly extended by the implied presence of thousands of people at risk and the use of the genocide label. Critics, including former State Department analyst George Kenney, argued that these early numerical claims mattered because there appeared to be a "magic number" when detailing which humanitarian disasters warranted western intervention. Echoing his comments made during the Bosnian war, he contended that the repeated use of genocide label forced an increasing distinction between big 'G' genocide (such as the Holocaust and Cambodia) and the remainder of the crises that might be labeled small 'g' genocide (Kenney 1995, p. 43; Kenney, p. 1999).

The amplification of the specific charge of rape became the first strategy employed by media representations. Just as NATO placed the larger humanitarian crisis in the context of larger events, media representations of rape allegations extended the textual charge by developing numeric frames to estimate the rapes and provided essential scenic and cultural details to reinforce these efforts. Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca describe amplification as the use of language to provide substance to a concept beyond simply increasing its scale, often by enumerating each part of a whole, until the larger image fully takes shape (1969, p. 175). In Kosovo, this occurred through both horizontal (quantitative) and vertical (qualitative) extensions of the accounts until the

rape charges appeared as a substantial problem requiring an international response (Plett, 2001, p. 25).

The tremendous difficulty of assessing the magnitude of these crimes in the earliest days of the conflict encouraged media accounts to determine quantitative accounts in concert with comparisons to similar historical events. Instead of assessing the veracity of those reports, many media accounts began the process of determining how many women were raped and situated the charges as part of a potentially wide population. By April 14, for example, *The Washington Post* reported that 3,000 new refugees from Kosovo brought accounts of "large-scale rapes" at the Djakovica army camp (Lippman & Vick, 1999). In May of 1999, The United States Department of State released its own history of the violence, *Erasing History: Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo* and recounted "systematic and organized mass rapes" (United States Department of State, 1999). Even though this report again relied solely on the refugee reports for its details, it became a regular reference for subsequent media reports (Ackerman & Naureckas, 2000, p. 98).

Even after the war ended, published accounts continued to describe the rapes in Kosovo on a scale unrecognized by any verifiable sources. In early July, *The Seattle Times* printed an editorial by a Professor of Russian Studies at Wheaton College and a graduate student who studied rape in the former Yugoslavia, which argued although while the number of women raped in Bosnia was probably closer to 50,000, "In Kosovo, the numbers are probably even greater (Powell & Chamberlain, 1999). *The Straits Times* assembled figures complied by *The London Observer*, the World Health Organization

and the Center for Disease Control, to estimate that 20,000 Kosovar women were raped in the *two years* before NATO intervened (2000).

When confronted by the inability to provide more detailed numbers, the State Department report, like much of the coverage, finds flaw within the Albanian Kosovar culture, arguing that, "We believe that many crimes of gendered violence have not been reported due to the cultural stigma attached to these offenses in Kosovar society" (1999). The effort to situate the rape charges among the conservative Albanian culture provides a textual constituent to the initial charge of rape. Unable to cite definitively the numbers of rapes, the report emphasized the mass element of the violence and it emphasized cultural restrictions on Albanian women as the culprit for limited reporting. This position doubly assails the masculine social order of Albanian society; they were both unable to prevent the assaults on *their* women and now their customs prevent the west from attempting to redress the situation.

In all of these accounts, the interplay between the scale of the violence, the intentionality of the Serbian campaign, and the restrictive nature of Albanian culture helps to produce rapes in Kosovo as a crisis worthy of comparison with past international tragedies. The initial charges, amplified by historical parallels and the institutional barrier of Albanian culture, serve to provide the foundation for the inclusion of rape as an important element of Kosovo's moral narrative. The next strategy examines how the charge of rape is situated within larger historical referents.

The second strategy employed in the representations is the development of a powerful historical analogy that provided greater explanatory power to current actors and events. G. Thomas Goodnight argues that the deployment of military force provides moments when public controversies often involve contested historical parallels (1996, p. 124). The ultimate application of these analogies, "provide common ground for institutional action" and in Kosovo the common ground became a depiction of one of the most disturbing moments of violence in the 20th century, the Holocaust committed by Nazi Germany (Goodnight, 1996, p. 124). The World War II analogy has a powerful resonance at many levels, including avoiding the complicated multi-sided political environment that resembled pre-World World I Europe.

The popular World War II narrative employs the Albanian characters in the familiar role of Europe's voiceless victims and places the current violence in a frame that already acknowledges the particular brutality of the violence and the absolute necessity of military means to reverse its course. This Holocaust narrative similarly positions NATO into its predecessor, the Allied Nations of World War II and their mission once again becomes the libertarian of Europe from the forces of evil (Johnstone, 2000, p. 14).

The Holocaust provides a unique culture symbol for the development of such a narrative. Even as the universality of religious icons has withered, American political culture still contains secular visions of radical evil, evil committed for its own ends and personified by Adolph Hitler (Hume, 2000, p. 71). Despite the difficulties inherent in measuring the great acts of violence in human history, the Holocaust narrative narrows

debate by concluding that these actions do not represent 'common' acts of violence. The Holocaust functions as an extremely powerful metaphor; employing the Holocaust comparison to explain a massacre is the equivalent of comparing a murder to the assassination of President Kennedy (Moeller, 1999, p. 223). These comparisons encourage the unification of American identity through a shared understanding that the United States bears a responsibility to prevent certain actions.

From the earliest days of the conflict, news coverage featured the commentary of Western political leaders comparing the character of ethnic violence in Kosovo with that of both German policies in the Second World War and the 1990s war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Clinton's comments introduced the notion of concentration camps into media stories, a parallel that resurfaced in CNN's interview with political advisors to the Kosovo Liberation Army (Nelson, 1999) and from the comments of German Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping who argued that, "There are serious indications of concentration camps in Kosovo" (*Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 1999). The German news agency *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* reported the development of this comparison,

> Scharping drew a direct comparison between Yugoslav policies in Kosovo and those of Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. "It is a systematic extermination, which reminds in a terrible way of what happened and was carried under Germany's name …" (1999)

Scharping's viewpoint echoed throughout the Western alliance. In Britain, Labour politician Ken Livingstone directly compared Milosevic to Hitler because, he "had used the worst evil possible to rise to political power, to divide his people, to trade on fear and

operate a regime of systematic mass rape and murder and genocide" (Evans, 1999). Even those who dissented with the Clinton administration policy still found grounds to engage the World War II parallel. On CNBC's *Hardball*, Senator Bob Kerry distinguished between Hitler and Milosevic's territorial ambitions, but came to a similar conclusion because the Serbs engaged in "similar Hitlerian tactics of erasing peoples by race, by ethnicity from the face of the Earth" (1999).

The depiction of Slobodan Milosevic as willing to employ the tactics of Hitler may appear overblown, but the transformation of the Serbs into Nazis provides only one element of the narrative's vitality. The transformation of the Albanian refugees into the Europeans uprooted by the German advance across Europe provides a sympathetic depth to the narrative that demonization fails to approximate. Far from the refugees appearing as silent figures littering the background, journalists repeat their narratives of violence and terror to provide support for new dispatches. Consider Anna Smith of *The London Daily Mail's* story of March second,

> It was a tale of one man's heartbreak and terror. But it was only one story of thousands as the pathetic flight of men, women and children from brutalised Kosovo continued. Every refugee coming across the border had their own horror story. And their accounts confirm the worst fears that inside Kosovo, hidden from the eyes of the world, Serbian troops are on the rampage (1999).

Even when the stories fail to reference explicitly the Nazi comparison, the logic of violence committed against innocent people in the name of ethnic superiority reinforces the motives that made the Holocaust such a powerful cultural event. Mary McGrory, a *Washington Post* columnist, also refutes the direct Milosevic as Hitler comparison, but

explains that the presence of televised refugees makes Kosovo very different from the Gulf War,

> Television helps Clinton, too. We may not know Balkan history, but we have been watching Kosovar refugees for many months. To many Americans, it is about them (1999).

Even without directly hearing their words, the images of the long lines of woman and children being forced to leave the homes reinforces the centrality of moral claims in Kosovo coverage. The mass nature of the rape camps became an important element of this transformation, a process for which the war in Bosnia laid the groundwork. When Kenneth Bacon drew the parallel between the latest reports from Kosovo and the images of camps during the Bosnian war he invoked the 1992 release of pictures of men behind barbed wire fences at the Omarska camps that provided the spark for greater attention to Bosnia and that now serve as much of the cultural memory of the Bosnian war (Moeller, 1999, p. 258). The essence of this depiction resides in the transformation of gendered violence into a crime committed by the strongest brand of evil, a radical evil that remains alien from the dominant social systems (Zimbardo, 1999).

Much as the Holocaust orients truly 'evil' violence from 'ordinary' violence, mass rapes provide a hierarchy of gendered violence. Built directly from the language of the Holocaust, the phrase 'rape camp' employs the unique revulsion associated with use of technological routine and prowess. CNN's Bernard Kalb argues that the phrase "death camps" stands among the most explosive words of the 20th century, and rape camps serve as an extension of this highly structured horror (Moeller, 1999, p. 271). This process of

accentuating the most violent and culturally reprehensible form of a violent act parallels the norms of domestic reports of rape. Marianne Meyers, in her examination of media coverage of rape, argues that not only does domestic reporting tends to ignore most rapes, but it also emphasizes serial rapists because, reporters justify coverage of serial rape as a kind of public service to alert the dangers of certain areas (1997, p. 93). As the national media utilize the construction of this most virulent form of evil, the distance between these crimes and those 'normal' acts of gendered violence widens.

The media's tendency to assume the role of watchdog helps to explain the emphasis on 'camps' and other such serial forms of gendered violence, such as when British Defense Secretary George Robertson described Slobodan Milosevic as a "serial ethnic cleanser" (Blomquist, 1999). By alerting the public to the relative importance of those crimes, the media implicitly recognizes that multiple offenders, and not more personal threats, remain the dominant threat to safety. Meyers argues that domestic reporting de-emphasizes non-serial forms of gendered violence and the parallel remains strong in international efforts. Despite the greater focus on gendered violence after the war in Bosnia, human rights organizations reported constant forms of gendered violence throughout Kosovo in the months and years before NATO commenced military operations (Human Rights Watch, 2000, p. 10-11). These incidents, however, failed to emerge as part of the larger Holocaust narrative because without the looming presence of NATO military force, the atrocities lack the reference point of the intervening savior.

Not only does the presence of the serial rapist justify the inattention to 'other rapists,' but the production of these rapists ignores the banality of gendered violence, because the atrocities in this narrative remains the exclusive purview of 'imbalanced' or 'sick' persons. Just as Hannah Arendt challenged the conventional wisdom that Adolph Eichmann represented danger not because of his radical ambitions, but because he so effectively represented the social mores that surrounded him, gendered violence becomes the sole province of those inherently evil persons and correspondingly the social structures that promote violence remain hidden (1963, p. 253). Just as in domestic coverage, the presence of these pathological men also allows for a distancing between gendered violence and the 'rest' of society, extending conceptions of realms that fail to implicate the dominant culture (Meyers, 1997, p. 10). In the European context, the emphasis appears not as sick individuals, but as members of a 'diseased' political culture which emphasizes violence as its cultural destiny and which requires American action to remove the tumor on the European political body. Much as Peter Erenhaus analyzes Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* as a reconstructed national identity, specifically constituted to remedy America's moral lapses in the years of Nazi rule, this Kosovo narrative provides a means of viewing American military action as another liberation of the concentration camps, this time corrected to include prompt action (2001, p. 334).

The final strategy of the rape representations emerged from the character of the alleged rapist. Post cold war dramas require the presence of an enemy and the presence of the Balkan identity functions in a culturally complex fashion to present an 'other' that

possess the most reprehensible traits of several major historical periods. The transformation of the Serbs into modern day Nazis represents but one element of this process. The emphasis on utilizing a violent historical narrative of the Balkans and accounts of the pre-modern character of the violence transforms the Serbian military into creatures so trapped by their own destiny that they sever the bonds that hold civilization together.

The Balkans consistently provides a regional identity that resists categorization with the dominant European models. Neither fully entrenched as members of the Communist bloc, nor fully a member of the traditional European cultural family, the Balkans remained largely defined by images of chronic political violence and instability (Hagen, 1999; Medvedev, 1999). Kenneth Burke argues that the presence of scapegoats works to strengthen social systems because the scapegoat provides evidence of the moral standing of each party's status (1950, p. 140-141). Maria Todorova explores the production of the Balkans as such a scapegoat within the larger European community. Extending Edward Said's project of analyzing the Orient, Todorova details the eastern 'other' constructed as the implicit contrast to the normalized west, through a development of the Balkans as the other located geographically within, but culturally excluded from, Europe (1997, p. 188). From this cultural geography, the Balkans emerges as a distinct cultural phenomenon precisely because their barbaric tendencies seem to represent a remote island where modern norms of civilization failed to reach. Europe no longer fears

the Soviet Other, but instead worries that it must maintain stability or fall victim to the plague of instability, Balkanization (Medvdev, 1999).

Throughout the twentieth century this narrative gained force, unifying the tumultuous events surrounding the Balkans and centralizing a principle cause of instability. Robert Kaplan, in his well-publicized *Balkan Ghosts,* explores this view,

> Whatever has happened in Beirut or elsewhere happened first, long ago, in the Balkans . . . Hostage taking and the wholesale slaughter of innocents were common . . . Twentieth-century came from the Balkans. Here men have been isolated by poverty and ethnic rivalry, dooming them to hate. Here politics has been reduced to a level of near anarchy that from time to time in history has flowed up the Danube into Central Europe. Nazism, for instance, can claim Balkan origins. Among the flophouses of Vienna, a breeding ground of ethnic resentments close to the southern Slavic world, Hitler learned how to hate so infectiously (1996, p. xxvii).

This view informs both media coverage and political leadership, especially as the reports of violence increased in the spring of 1999 (Hagan, 1999). This particular text, for example, receives popular acclaim for dissuading President Clinton from taking decisive military action in Bosnia during the 1995 war, so much so that Clinton later acknowledged he needed to read the "real history" of the region (Drew, 1995, p. 157; Deans, 1999).

For much of the media coverage, this view of Southern European history plays a dominant role in informing the motives of its occupants. Utilizing a common technique of detailing the major conflicts in the region's history, media outlets often drew their own implications for the contemporary conflict. Extending patterns learned in Bosnia, the stories emphasize historical events as explanatory principles for the current violence,

such as the Serbian defeat at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 and the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and they continue to inform the depictions of violence in Kosovo (Moeller, 1999, p. 262). *The Washington Times* described Kosovo as, "one of those obscure places that have a way of haunting history with their unsettled and competing ethnic claims" (Barber, 1999). *The Charleston Gazette* similarly described the Serbian-Muslim conflict as "Ping Pong Wars, endless payback struggles to settle ancient accounts in blood and bone," before concluding that "ethnic hate of the Balkans seems eternal" (1999, p. 4A). Christopher Winner of *USA Today* concurred, arguing, "History seems to have a grudge against the Balkans" and cited sympathetic Serbian academics that place Milosevic in a larger context arguing that, "Balkan history is rife with evil men" (1999, p. 6A).

The experts who make these claims come not only from the Balkans. Newspaper accounts frequently quoted prominent American figures to argue that war was permanent in the Balkans. Former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft expressed strong skepticism about quick resolution of a "700-year-old religious and ethnic conflict" that would last "as far as the eye can see" (Lambro, 1999). Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger rejected the ability of the current efforts to make a difference because, "Ethnic conflict has been endemic in the Balkans for centuries" (Kissinger, 1999).

The narrative of endemic ethnic violence helped to portray the Serbs as people who remain outside of the general conceptions of modern civilization. Todorova details how the Balkan identity exists as one of the European 'other' that fails to conform the

normalized standards of behavior found in the 'civilized' world (1997, p. 3). Often this violence appears to still reflect the times that surrounded the initiation of these tensions. For Powell & Chamberlain, "What happened in the former Yugoslavia was a throwback to the Dark Ages" (1999) and The New York Times' Thomas Friedman concurred,

> But while there is much that was post-modern about this war, there was something pre-modern as well -- the barbaric mass-murdering and rapes that the Serb military engaged in Kosovo. This was old-fashioned evil, although even it had a certain bizarre 21st-century twist (1999, p. A17).

The Journal of Commerce likewise argued that the Serbs harkened back to a different historical era,

> Slobodan Milosevic is a bloodthirsty, barbaric demagogue who has rallied his people to rampage throughout the Balkans in sprees of murder, rape and destruction worthy of the darker days of the Middle Ages (1999, p. 4A).

Even if the comparisons failed to transform the violence into an act of pre-modern violence, the descriptions of Milosevic and the Serbian forces constantly emphasized the brutality of the violence as the primary indication of the need for Western military action. In the daily media briefings covered live on CNN, Kenneth Bacon contended that the lack of regret separated Milosevic from NATO because NATO remained penitent for civilian casualties, but Milosevic "intentionally turned Kosovo into a killing field and that was no accident" (Randall, 1999). In a widely replayed video clip, President Clinton summarized the moral repudiation of Milosevic,

> His so-called ethnic cleansing has included concentration camps, murder, rape, the destruction of priceless religious, cultural and historical sites, books and records. This is wrong. It is evil (Shaw, 1999).

A century of violence in Europe provides plenty of contextual opportunities for this depiction to be discursively hardened through both formal and informal accounts of the Balkan peoples (Todorova, 1997, p. 14). Michael Wines of *The New York Times* summarized this culturally dominant view of the conflict's history, "The war only underscored the deep ideological divide between an idealistic New World bent on ending inhumanity and an Old World equally fatalistic about unending conflict" and summarized the differences based on the perceived value of life,

> Put baldly, there is also a yawning gap between the West and much of the world on the value of a single life. Much of the world is still Hobbesian, looking to strongmen to impose order on lives that are nasty, brutish and short (1999, p. 1).

The narrative of the Serbs as pre-modern barbarians provides support for military action because it offers the only means of communicating with this society that places less value on human life. Not only is violence necessary, but it also supports the contention that NATO operations need not be limited because such a 'modern' manner of waging war may not be sufficient (Robinson, 1999, p. 680). The ethical discourse of stopping ethnic cleansing, fought through a military ideology that seeks to avoid any allied casualties, provides compelling testimony that American intervention remains both morally superior and politically necessary (Medvdev, 1999). This process of depicting the safety of women's bodies at risk from a barbaric other resonates strongly with the same types of appeals that once justified the lynching of African-American males.

The ability of socially privileged groups to allege sexual violence against, typically white, woman possesses a long history in American culture. Angela Davis explains that rape laws were designed to protect the familial property of upper class men, their wives and daughters (1983, p. 172). These laws historically not only were used disproportionately against minority populations, but also for the purpose of providing legitimacy to state exercises of violence. The uncomfortable parallel seems stronger after considering Davis' warning that "The myth of the Black rapist has been methodologically conjured up whenever waves of violence and terror against the Black community have required convincing justifications" (1983, p. 173).

As American political discourse stumbled through the immediate post-Cold War period, it appears to have returned to racially charged strategies as a means of placing violence in a more acceptable narrative. This finding is consistent with analysis of domestic media coverage which scapegoats black men while simultaneously emphasizing violence committed upon white women in media accounts (Fenton, 1998). It appears that both domestic and international reports selectively emphasize racial themes when they interact with traditional conceptions of gender. Although many differences in the nature of the events prevent a literal application of the historical lynch mob to contemporary foreign policy, the similarity of the animalized nature of the violence denigrates the perpetrators in a parallel manner, sufficient to provide legitimacy for acts of retribution. Even without the Soviet threat, presidents may now access the use of force as a means of

controlling a different enemy, but one that embraces the savagery so long associated with the Soviets.

Conclusion

Assessing the implications of the Kosovo campaign remains perilous, especially in such proximity to the conflict, but analyzing the legacy of the media campaign can offer valuable insights into the process by which military force is justified. Upon the conclusion of the air campaign, President Clinton addressed the nation and proclaimed that the operation had achieved a "safer world," where "aggression against an innocent people has been contained and is being turned back" (June 11, 1999). The Independent International Commission on Kosovo argued that one of the most lasting legacies of the conflict would be the promotion of "the controversial doctrine of 'humanitarian intervention' squarely in the world's eye" (2000, p. 19). Rhetorical critics may observe the manner in which humanitarian intervention, justified by the containment of aggression, helped to thwart potential public unrest.

Operation Allied Force never enjoyed tremendous public support, but the most sympathetic appeal consistently emerged from the humanitarian dimension of the crisis. The earliest Gallup public opinion polls reported that only a bare majority of Americans favored the operation, but over sixty percent of the public agreed that Americans possessed a moral obligation to "keep the peace in Kosovo" (Gillespie, March 26, 1999). As the air campaign progressed and the reports of expanded Serbian operations became

pronounced, concerns about the mission's effectiveness mounted, producing a "significant downturn" in public support (Newport, 1999). As the polls numbers dropped, the only contingency that could muster support for the introduction of ground troops remained the protection of refugees, with almost seventy percent of those polled supporting a moral obligation to help the refugees (Gillespie, April 16, 1999; Newport, 1999).

Not only did public support remain relatively firm on these grounds, but media critics contend that mainstream news coverage remained favorable, even during the bleakest days of the Albanian exodus (Keeble, 2000, p. 69). By occupying the media space, the official accounting of events provided the frame for much of the media coverage, even through the Chinese embassy bombing and reports of 'accidental' civilian casualties. The enhancement of rape as a major crime and the construction of these crimes as genocidal or Holocaust-like provided the necessary foundation for media reports based around the reports of Kosovar refugees. Finally, the establishment of the Balkan political identity as something incapable of responding to non-violent forms of diplomacy further marginalized potential coverage of alternate solutions to the crisis.

This dimension of war rhetoric should particularly worry critics because of the enhanced speed of the media cycle and nature of modern warfare. A war fought without front lines and without the collision of armed forces has led Paul Virilio to claim that Kosovo "bypassed territorial space" (Armitage, 2000). Faced with this new mode of conflict and presented with access to military produced footage and storylines, the

media's ability and desire to produce independent storylines diminishes. Even as journalists like Michael Ignatieff warn of the danger of "virtual war" (2000, p. 212), Kathleen Jamieson concedes that under such restricted media rules of engagement, "the ability for each side to create its own reality is almost unlimited" (Bruni, 1999). The speed of military operations allows reports, like Kenneth Bacon's accounts of the rape camps, to enter the competitive world of the 24-hour news cycle without proper investigation. If such reports are ultimately deemed false, it provides little challenge to military interests as long as the information helped to produce a positive news cycle. Commenting on this process of later discovered inconsistencies, the Independent International Commission on Kosovo contended that the media effort "left a bad aftertaste, raising doubts, ex post facto, about the legitimacy of NATO's media operation" (2000, p. 217).

These doubts encircle the humanitarian justifications for military action. NATO failed to provide some method for preventing large-scale retaliation against the Kosovar Albanians, creating a situation where military analyst Anthony Cordesman states, "at least 80% of the people NATO attempted to protect suffered grievously during the war" (1999, p. 51). The international community's lack of contingency planning also complicated the humanitarian crisis of fleeing refugees and overwhelmed international relief organizations attempting to provide basic services (Mertus, 2000, p. 44).

These doubts also extend to the coverage of gendered violence. Even as the reports ignored practical and generally 'unexciting' details like the lack of shelter for

refugees, coverage of the gendered violence received substantial attention (Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000, p. 222). Human Rights Watch's post-conflict assessment concluded that although gendered violence was used as "weapons of war," they also criticized NATO's dissemination of these crimes. In their estimation NATO, "used the theme of human rights abuses generally, and rape specifically, to justify their policies in Yugoslavia" (Human Rights Watch – III, 2000). Acknowledging a number of systematic problems that contributed to under-reporting, the organization found sufficient evidence to verify ninety-six cases of sexual assault. Even with substantial latitude, these figures bear little resemblance to the claims of 20,000 or more victims alleged in media reports. Specifically refuting the information that Kenneth Bacon provided, Human Rights Watch provided the following warning

> … we are concerned that NATO's use of rape to bolster support for the war relied on unconfirmed accounts of rape. Offering such accusations with little or no basis suggests that those invoking the abuses may have been more concerned with pursuing certain political goals than with ascertaining what happened to individual victims and acting to prevent or remedy the abuse. Historically, when the horror of rape has been invoked to serve political ends, neither the purpose nor the result was to ensure accountability (2000).

Despite these troubling reports, a number of scholars appear to have concurred with President Clinton's assessment of the operation as, "a hopeful affirmation of human dignity and human rights for the 21st century" (June 11, 1999). Many had argued just a few years earlier that the tremendous international attention garnered to the gendered violence in Bosnia represented a watershed in international politics. Echoing Julie Mertus, Catherine MacKinnon described it as a "historic opportunity," a moment, "when

the world says never again - not in war, not in peace - and this time means it" (1994, p. 195). This chapter argues that instead of optimism, the war in the Kosovo counsels scholars to examine closely representations of gendered violence because, as Brownmiller warned, national actors may transform women's bodies into the symbolic battlefield of these virtual conflicts (1994, p. 38).

When international crises erupt, the exigence of national unity encourages governments to seek the most salient of appeals, a process that makes gendered claims a likely candidate. Kosovo demonstrates that representations of gendered violence, as part of a broader humanitarian rubric, possess greater saliency than other nascent post-cold war rhetorical hybrids (Stuckey, 1995, p. 223-24). These enlightened appeals to savagery demonstrate that the rhetorical processes of narrative construction and enemy depiction remain vibrant in contemporary media coverage. Even if this narrative does not appear sufficient to justify a long-term or large-scale operation, the importance of selectively framing a tenuous moment during an operation should not be discounted (Entman, 2000, p. 11; Keeble, 2000, p. 61-62).

Just as the emphasis on rape camps draws its significance as the highest element of the hierarchy of gendered violence, the further attention to international charges of gendered violence does little to draw resolve 'common' rape, whether domestically or internationally. Little attention is now paid to gender violence in Kosovo and the construction of Serbian culture as uniquely dangerous in their treatment of women only distracts from the one million annual cases of rape committed by Americans in the United

States (National Organization for Women, 1998). Not only do such international claims continue to obfuscate gendered violence as a core issue for all societies, they repeat a line of emergency appeal that diminishes in value with each repetition. As Susan Moeller notes, the chain of progressively more vivid and more horrible crisis representations serves to undermine support from an increasingly overwhelmed public (1999, p. 35).

As the labels and metaphors of even the most powerful cultural symbols, including the Holocaust, begin to elicit less response, is it any wonder that gendered violence now appears as a powerful symbol of modern evil? Just as Arendt argued, the greatest danger remains in isolating of evil from the society that surrounds it, rendering all other forms of gendered violence banal and commonplace. This danger is magnified when contemporary notions of masculinity do not delegitimate violence, but instead embrace it as a primary tactic to protect women (Faludi, 1999, p. 36-37). Even as the first rape cases have been tried for the war in Bosnia, no such charges have yet been filed in the prosecution of war crimes in Kosovo. Before too many wars are fought to 'protect' women, critics should demand that the uniform epidemic of gendered violence be recognized.

CHAPTER 3

TEMPORALITY AND THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST IRAQ

Introduction

When President George H.W. Bush addressed the nation on the eve of the Gulf War, he presented the views of several active-duty military personnel as support for the urgency of beginning military operations against Iraq. Master Sergeant J.P. Kendall argued that, "What we're doing is going to chart the future of the world for the next 100 years. It's better to deal with this guy now than five years from now" (Bush, 1991). Despite the devastating assault inflicted by the United States, future American presidents would 'deal with this guy' not only for five years, but for the next ten years. The 10th anniversary of the Gulf War featured the bizarre combination of solemn ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery and Saddam Hussein's boast that "Iraq has triumphed over the enemies of the (Arab) nation and over its enemies" (Arraf, 2001).

Any investigation of American military operations in the 1990s must examine the constant presence of crises with Iraq. The reconstruction of American political identities in the post-Gulf War period begins with the elevation of Saddam Hussein as a primary threat to American interests in the Middle East. The very decision to categorize the 1990s

as a historical period relies on the 1991 Persian Gulf War as the initiation of a fundamentally distinct historical period. Even as other operations came and went, the confrontation with Iraq simmered, occasionally boiling over in the national media.

This chapter looks at the Clinton administration's rhetorical justifications for operations against Iraq, both during high profile moments of crises and routine operations that became so mundane as to be no longer considered newsworthy. The chapter specifically attempts to provide insight into the process by which American political institutions construct representations of a seemingly permanent enemy. Unlike the other crises examined in this project, the duration of the confrontation with an apparently inferior military power appears to defy conventional expectations. In this unending crisis, Saddam Hussein and Iraq must appear not only to present a threat to American interests, but provide a particular kind of danger that must be reconciled with the seemingly endless nature of this confrontation.

In order to complete this investigation, this chapter includes three stages. First, changes in the American norms of warfare are examined from the perspective of both war and crisis rhetoric. These norms are grounded in the context of the Gulf War. Second, the chapter conducts a reading of American political discourse, from both the federal government and the mass media, as a means of examining the representations that justify action against Iraq. These arguments are organized around the importance of a temporal narrative of the conflict's duration and technological indicators of the mission's success. Finally, the implications of these lines of argument are discussed, specifically considering

the tensions between arguments made in defense of the operations and those made in opposition. The chapter concludes with a call for scholars to reconsider war rhetoric in the construction of extended crises.

Rhetoric of Military Operations: From War to Crisis

The process by which America goes to war in the 21st century bears little resemblance to the legal structures created by the Constitution. Although Congress is specifically authorized as the sole body with the power to declare war, the actual exercise of that authority has come to reside within the presidency (Fisher 1995, pp. 7-9). The exercise of this power has become an important source for cultural rituals and norms. Americans expect the president to address the nation and explain why the nation is at war and they expect that American cultural and military preeminence to provide the resources for success. This chapter examines the rhetorical implications of recent trends that move away from declarations of a formal state of war and toward a repetitive series of military crises.

Phillip Wander has argued that the rhetoric of American foreign policy becomes part of a ritual through which public officials provide interpretations of international events to the American public (1984, p. 339). Cultural critics (Der Derian, Faludi, Gibson, Jeffords, Slotkin) have echoed Wander's observation that official explanations of America's wars have been "absorbed in and recapitulated in a thousands different ways through popular culture" (1984, p. 343). These examinations of the ritualistic norms of

American views of warfare emphasize the importance of finality in confrontations between good and evil. Complications, such a complex political structures, are reduced into a single villain capable of being challenged and defeated by a cultural hero (Gibson, 1994, p. 77). The erasure of historical complexity into the immediacy of a final confrontation transforms wars into duels between respective champions. A hero's last stand represents an important moment in a culture's history; defeat would leave a society at risk from the uncontrolled desires of the evildoers, but victory ushers in a new era of harmony (Slotkin, 1998, p. 511). Cultural texts reinforce this ritual's importance in the construction of American masculinity, contending that the triumph over a particular enemy can cure the ills that individual men encounter in their lives (Faludi, 1999, p. 15).

These expectations appeared increasingly at odds with contemporary norms of American military power. Late 20th century presidents routinely deployed force and then sought national support post-hoc, a move aided by the War Powers Act, despite the fact that it has never been formally recognized by any presidential administration. The Act formalized the arrangement whereby the president could initiate action and then congressional repudiation would be necessary to prevent the president from continuing the operation at certain, predetermined time periods (Fisher, 1995, p. 123). In this process, presidents can describe the only formal congressional veto on their action as a threat to the safety of troops already deployed into combat.

In these pseudo-wars, American troops are sent into combat, but the nation never formally assumes a wartime posture. United Nations enforcement efforts, advisory roles,

police actions, rescue missions, and peacekeeping are some of the official rationales for these operations.[9] These trends do not ameliorate all functional restraints on the commander-in-chief authority; they instead highlight the importance of the president's efforts to articulate the unique exigence of each operation. The seemingly expansive nature of executive discretion can unravel if the public and congress no longer support the executive's course of action.

These structural changes carry substantial implications for rhetorical analysis of presidential rhetoric. If presidents no longer describe operations as war and if their burden, i.e., defending an initiated operation versus arguing in favor of a future operation, continues to change, can the tools of war rhetoric be productively employed? Many elements of traditional war rhetoric continue to be employed by presidents in these pseudo-wars; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson (1990) articulate five crucial elements of war rhetoric, four of which still appear relevant in contemporary military actions. Presidential rhetoric continues to emphasize the importance of careful deliberation, it often includes a clear narrative, it legitimates the president's actions as the commander-in-chief and there are often concerns about strategic misrepresentations (p. 105). The final characteristic, the manner to which "the audience is exhorted to unanimity of purpose and total commitment" (p. 105), warrants substantial reconsideration. The military operations of the 1990s, however they are articulated, generally fail to claim that the adversary "must be thwarted at all costs" (p. 109).

Even though the importance of sacrifice to the national cause continues to appear in criticism of war rhetoric (German), American war rhetoric in this period asked citizens more for consent than 'total commitment.' In these operations, the presence of all-volunteer armed forces combined with a tremendous technological advantage to provide the United States with the prospect of short, but successful, missions with little or no loss of American lives. This disconnection between war as a moment of national sacrifice and war as a brief media event portends substantial problems for those cultural expectations that war can be viewed as a duel between parties. In the continuous effort to prevent loss of American lives, missions may be designed in a limited fashion, reducing the opportunity for a dramatic, albeit costly, American victory. The Bush administration's decision not to follow Iraqi troops back to Baghdad in the closing days of the Gulf War provides a powerful example of the balance between mission objectives and the importance of preserving the belief in casualty-free warfare.

In many ways, these military operations take on many of traits previously analyzed as the crisis rhetoric of American presidents. Denise Bostdorff describes crisis as "the critical moment in the life of an issue or a dispute" (1993, p. 5) and Richard Cherwitz and Kenneth Zagacki (1986) argue that justificatory rhetoric, where presidential discourse becomes integral to the construction of retaliatory actions, exists as, "irrevocable, direct, and decisive" (p. 310) and that beyond a certain point, "patience must give way to decisive action (p. 310). This line of scholarship prioritizes the temporal nature of the events, the public's expectation of timely action (Kiewe, 1994, p. xvii) and

the importance of urgency in these appeals (Bostdorff, 1993, p. 5). In these analyses, moments of crisis serve as important linguistic constructions because presidential rhetoric provides meaning to specific events (Bostdorff, 1993, p. 205).

Addressing Bonnie Dow's concern that some crisis scholarship unfortunately homogenizes the exigences that mark certain crisis rhetoric (1989, p. 295), this chapter examines the strain of justificatory rhetoric that pervades American discourse about Iraq. Specifically, the chapter examines disruptions in the traditional role that justificatory rhetoric plays in describing American actions as a necessary and final response to the actions of another (Cherwitz & Zagacki, 1986, p. 311). By describing a crisis as unique, it allows presidents to take drastic actions against another state because of the particular exigence of their transgressions against the United States. The challenge arises in the form of conclusion to these crises. The very nature of such discourse defines events and delineates a predictable pattern of behavior as, "the potential end-point of crises," "requiring no additional moves or countermoves" (p. 311), a logic that can be challenged if similar patterns of crises continue to plague a president.

This temporal understanding of crises strongly informs the expectations for American actions. Past research demonstrates that American presidents often explain national crisis as "tests of national will" (Bostdorff, 1993, p. 11). This interpretation works to construct the crisis as a moment where American actions must be sufficient to prevent the repeat of such events. If crisis no longer serve as moments of national challenges, then the process of understanding crisis appears at risk; instability in the

construction of one's enemy implicates the deeply held cultural practices of mythologizing warfare. How can America successfully pass a test of national will without the clear defeat of the very actor who instigated such a crisis? The decade of American operations against Iraq provide an expansive case study for such questions. Despite a war and a decade of subsequent operations, military hostilities continue even as both sides continue to claim victory.

Operation Desert Storm

The war against Iraq, more popularly known as Operations Desert Shield and Storm, appeared to be the prototype for a new model of military operations. Iraq's invasion of neighboring Kuwait in the early days of August 1990 set off a series of international reactions, culminating in the construction of an American-led military coalition designed to reverse Iraqi control of Kuwait. The effort to develop the coalition, to win support for the necessary United Nations resolutions, and the struggle to gain congressional approval all occurred before a public anxious to understand how the new, post-cold war era would govern itself.

In many respects, the Gulf War was America's "perfect war" (Kellner, 1992, p. 386). Saddam Hussein provided an easy subject to personify all of America's distastes and the tremendous American military power kept the conflict brief and winnable. Marc Pollack (1992, p. 205) traces the Bush administration's narrative that positioned capitulation to the invasion of Kuwait as the historical rerun of appeasing Nazi Germany

at Munich. Douglas Kellner concurs that media coverage embraced Bush's frame of good versus evil and transformed Hussein into an "absolute villain" (1992, p. 63) that precluded any negotiated settlement.

This clear division between the U.S. and Iraq embraced dominant orientationial metaphors of recent American history to repress any dissonant comparisons. Mary Stuckey (1992; 1995) argues that during periods of unstable political narratives, the contrast between World War II and Vietnam becomes crucial to an effort to define the present. Bush took great pains to clarify this position, declaring that, "this will not be another Vietnam" (1991, p. 391) because American troops "will not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their back" (1991, p. 391). This explanation for the problems of the Vietnam War functions as a redemptive narrative where the clear demarcations between good and evil, victory and defeat, Allied and Axis can lead America away from the chaos of Vietnam and toward a triumph in the Gulf (Kendrick, 1994, pp. 60-61)

The dramatic success of American planning and technology led observers to claim nothing less than the reconstruction of America's national identity. Echoing President Bush, *Time* columnist Stanley Cloud (1991) argued that American troops:

> … may have defeated not just the Iraqi army but also the more virulent ghosts from the Vietnam era: self-doubt, fear of power, divisiveness, a fundamental uncertainty about America's purpose in the world (p. 52).

Daniel Hallin and Todd Gitlin (1994) extend this contention, explaining that prominent media frames portrayed the war as ritual, "creating and celebrating

community solidarity" (p. 152). American might had triumphed and the nation became, "strong, resilient, and still optimistic" (Halberstam, 2001, pp. 12-13).

These initial assessments of the change in American identity would fade alongside those predictions of Saddam Hussein's demise. Despite a barrage of media stories highlighting the Iraqi opposition to Hussein's rule (Kellner, 1992, p. 415), hopes of a domestic revolt were dramatically dashed by an Iraqi military assault (Smyth, 1998). Highlighting the fleeting resurgence of American idealism, President Bush's vacation and the destruction of Iraqi Kurds opposed to Hussein both appeared as prominent news events in April 1991 (Kellner, 1992, p. 417). Within two years, Bush, not Hussein, would be out of office, replaced by a young president who would soon find himself embroiled in the same Iraqi dilemma. The American public had dismissed Bush from office; the expected wave of post-war support never materialized, leading David Halberstam to argue that the war "had surprisingly little traction … it was a war without real resonance" (2001, pp. 15-16).

Justifications for American Military Operations Against Iraq

The history of post-Gulf War military operations against Iraq stands unparalleled in the modern media age as a war without closure. Throughout the 1990's, a series of military operations and actions would be launched against Iraq. Determining the exact number of interactions between American and Iraqi forces remains a process fraught with ambiguities; official Pentagon statements confirm one dozen individual operations since

the completion of the Gulf War (Federation of American Scientists). These operations are magnified by the near-constant skirmishes between American aircraft and Iraqi air defense systems. Beyond sheer numerical estimates, these conflicts provide an interesting case study for the examination of American military discourse targeted at a single enemy over the course of a decade.

Although individual circumstances provide nuanced distinctions between the impetuses of each incident, they collectively form the basis of American policy toward Iraq. With each subsequent crisis event, the administration and its critics possess a new opportunity to continue their debate about the correct course of American policy. The layering that results emerges as the focus of this analysis. Analyzed collectively this body of discourse allows rhetorical critics to examine the essential components of an evolutionary policy. A review of these public communications leads to the conclusion that the administration faced two primary rhetorical challenges in the articulation of Iraq policy: maintaining a coherent explanation of American goals throughout the unusually long engagement and developing standards that could measure the success of each operation.

The first rhetorical challenge to the Clinton administration stems from the tension inherent in a 'permanent' crisis. If analysis of both wars and national crises supports the contention that presidential discourse must articulate their actions as essential to a moment of finality, how could the Clinton administration develop a narrative that could explain the need for repeated actions against Iraq? An answer can be found by exploring

Paul Ricoeur's (1980) challenge to reexamine the intersection of narrative and temporality. Ricoeur chides literary critics and historians alike for failing to conceptualize the centrality of time in the construction of narratives and explores multiple dimensions of temporality, contending that "time has disappeared form the horizon of the theories of history and narrative" (1980, p. 172).

Ricoeur's analysis embraces the plot as the primary structure to explore temporality in narrative. For Ricoeur, plot functions as the broader whole that organizes discrete events into a story (1980, p. 171). Emphasizing the importance of plot is central to his assessment that temporality guides narratives, providing a means to trace the development of a tale. Ricoeur's analysis differentiates between a chronological (episodic) and nonchronological (configurational) dimension for the narrative expression of time and examines the play produced by these potentially conflicting representations.

Narratives that embrace chronological dimensions emphasize the linear representation of time (1980, p. 178). They are marked by the references to 'and then' and they impose a heavy burden that the story must contain answers to 'what is next?' The flow moves characters along until the "irreversible order of time" (1980, p. 179) concludes its account. This reliance on the movement of time differs from the configurational or explicitly nonchronological dimension of temporality. These plots define their meaning by collecting individual events and stitching them together with an understanding of patterns or routines (1980, p. 179). In this dimension, the correlation of acts, not the movement between them, serves as the primary determinant of plot. The

utility of applying Ricoeur's work to an analysis of military operations is found in his conclusion that neither dimension can fully replace the other; instead he encourages critics to examine how these representations function in concert.

This tension between linear and thematic views of time is found throughout the rhetoric of American foreign policy. As the earlier discussion of crisis rhetoric indicated, presidential rhetoric in a moment of crisis emphasizes the importance of the next American action and its soundness as a means of remedying a threat to national interest. Much of foreign policy rhetoric, however, relies on the unification of events as testimony to larger themes. Martin Medhurst's discussion of Cold War rhetorical norms, for example, emphasizes the "ever-present constraining force" (1997, p. 21) of superpower tension. From this perspective, moments of Soviet-American tension can be viewed as instances of ideological tension between the superpowers, not just as a linear series of events.

Using the divide of crises and non-crises fails to provide a useful perspective to analyze Iraqi-American tensions; indeed the value of such a study remains in exploring how crises become ritualized as part of the larger construction of foreign policy. The tension between chronological and organizational dimensions pervaded the Clinton administration's explanation of its Iraq policy. Even though the norms of crises rhetoric dictate that presidents address the moment as an opportunity to redress the causes of crises, the administration's limited policy always acknowledged that future crises were likely. Clinton attempts to provide a thematic understanding of the events, typically

centering on the brutality of Hussein's actions, encouraged critics to demand an accounting of 'what comes next?' Unable to purely rely on a configurational interpretation of events, the administration was forced to defend its policy across both temporal interpretations.

Containment as Configurational Discourse

The Clinton administration was much maligned for its failure to develop of a coherent foreign policy, but its Middle Eastern policy stands as a prominent exception (Gause, 1994, p. 56). The construction of a policy of dual containment, designed to prevent either Iran or Iraq from threatening American interests, emerged in the spring of 1993 and remained in effect throughout the administration's tenure. The policy sought to coordinate military, diplomatic and economic tools in an effort to block the emergence of a regional hegemon (Walsh, D., 1998, p. 78). Containing Iraq became the administration's thematic or configurational explanation to guide each individual crisis. Defining the lifespan of such containment, however, provided a constant challenge for the administration.

In the earliest public explanation of the policy, Martin Indyk, a special assistant to the President at the National Security Council, explained that the purpose "is to establish clearly and unequivocally that the current regime in Iraq is a criminal regime, beyond the pale of international society and, in our judgment, irredeemable" (1993). According to Indyk, this criminal government would pose a threat "as long as the Saddam Hussein

regime survives" (1993). In each successive crisis the administration emphasized the manner in which Hussein continued to perform criminal acts that demonstrated a lack of respect for human life. Each belligerent action posed a threat to American interests and therefore demanded an American response. Military analyst Anthony Cordesman likened the situation to the Cold War because of the "cycle of … challenge and response" (Porter, 1996).

The administration based the necessity of containing the Iraqi threat on two primary sets of evidence: the importance of the Gulf War and Hussein's actions in previous conflicts. The Clinton administration repeatedly examined individual crises as extensions of Desert Storm. In October 1994, motivated by reports of provocative Iraqi troop movements, Clinton reminded the nation that Hussein had threatened "the same border" only three and a half years before and that the dramatic movement of American forces in the theater was "Because of what happened in 1990" (1994). When Iraqi forces moved against Kurdish factions in the fall of 1996, Clinton described the Iraqi behavior as "reckless" and that the American response must be "strong and immediate, as President Bush demonstrated in Operation Desert Storm and as we showed two years ago… and as we showed again today" (CNN, 1996a). Completing the merger of the events, Secretary of Defense William Perry argued that this specific Iraqi action was not the sole basis for the American response: "The issue is not simply the Iraqi attack on Irbil, it is the clear and present danger that Saddam Hussein poses to his neighbors" (CNN, 1996b). If America did not respond, Iraq "might move against their neighbors to

the south as they did in August 1990 and again in October of 1994" (CNN, 1996b). Each event lost its unique identity as they were woven together as a single tale of Iraqi challenges to American resolve.

Over the course of the administration the containment policy became increasingly fused with this narrative of tested credibility. At a nationally televised Town Hall meeting designed to explain the administration's policy during the February 1998 crisis, National Security Advisor Sandy Burger explained that "we must be prepared to respond firmly to reckless actions," something that "we've done successfully over this decade" (Woodruff & Shaw, 1998). To Berger, containment began as soon as the Gulf War concluded; the moment when the Bush administration "ejected Iraq from Kuwait and imposed tough conditions for a cease-fire." Clinton's subsequent actions simply extend this pattern, such as when he "struck hard at Iraqi intelligence headquarters" after the Bush assassination plot and then when his 1994 deployment forced "Saddam to back down" (Woodruff & Shaw, 1998).

The utility of containment as the core of administration policy can also be seen in the way it blends the already existing representation of Hussein as a brutal dictator. Extending an effort begun in the early months of the Gulf War (Kellner, 1995), the Clinton administration emphasized Hussein's viciousness as further evidence of the need for the American quarantine. Senior officials repeatedly referenced Hussein's past actions, such as when Secretary of State Madeline Albright argued that Hussein, "unlike any other leader, has used weapons of mass destruction even against his own people"

(Woodruff & Shaw, 1998). This explanation of past crimes helps to highlight the importance of Iraq's production of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs); Hussein's earlier use *proves* a risk existed at any moment. During the December 1998, crisis Clinton utilized this line of argument to explain why Iraq's possession of WMDs was different from other nations

> With Saddam, there's one big difference: he has used them, not once but repeatedly -- unleashing chemical weapons against Iranian troops during a decade-long war, not only against soldiers, but against civilians; firing Scud missiles at the citizens of Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Iran -- not only against a foreign enemy, but even against his own people, gassing Kurdish civilians in Northern Iraq (December 16, 1998).

The ability to define Hussein's possession of WMDs as uniquely destabilizing to the interests of all Middle Eastern peoples buttressed the claim for military action, even as it displaced the distinctions between these chronologically disparate events.

This effort to supplant different historical moments as distinct events became pronounced when the international inspection regime constructed to prevent the development of these weapons began to collapse. Clinton situated Iraqi's intransigence as a reminder of "what we learned in the 20th century" that "the only answer to aggression is firmness, determination, and, when necessary, action" (February 17, 1998). Hussein's actions therefore become synonymous with earlier acts of brutality and the uniqueness of this moment became secondary to the importance of understanding that only military solutions should be considered.

Ricoeur contended that neither dimension of temporality could fully replace the other; an observation validated by the public commentary of the Clinton administration. Even as they developed a coherent narrative organized around the need to contain a dangerous threat, concerns for linearity, expressed as 'what next,' found their way into public pronouncements. From the earliest operations, Clinton explained the nuances of each crisis with an explicit acknowledgment of future dangers: "If Saddam and his regime contemplate further illegal provocative actions they can be certain of our response" (June 26, 1993).

Even when Iraq made concessions, such as during the 1994 confrontation, Clinton cautioned that "We'll be watching very closely" (October 10, 1994) as Iraq attempted to comply with United Nations resolutions. His 1996 comments echo the call to future action, clarifying that if American allies were threatened, "we will act with force if necessary" (CNN, 1996a). In February 1998 he argued that dealing with Iraq required "constant vigilance" even as he outlined that "genuine solution" would include the standard "Iraq must agree, and soon, to free, full, unfettered access to these [weapons] sites anywhere in the country" (February 17, 1998). Cohen expressed a willingness to consider this state of tension in the wake of Operation Desert Fox, contending that, "we will remain at the ready for an indefinite period of time"(December, 16, 1998).

Although the policy provided a foundation for the administration's efforts, it also served as a lightning rod for criticism.[10] One of the prominent concerns originated from the lack of an exit strategy, an important element of post-Vietnam operations. *The New*

York Times columnists Ethan Bronner & Youseef Ibrahim compared the operations to a "vexing" game of "cat and mouse" and asked, "What is the endgame? What is the long-term strategy? How many more times can this happen?" (1998). Congressional criticism mounted not only from the questionable timing of the December 1998 strikes, [11] but also to the apparent lack of results, summarized in the words of one columnist, "No air campaign has ever attracted so little attention - or produced such meager results. Call it Operation Desert Futility" (Anderson, 1999).

The rhetoric of containment policy, and its inability to confront questions of the 'next' crisis simultaneously empowered of Hussein as a dominant actor. The administration's choice of 'containing' as a central term fostered the historical analogy when the United States adopted a defensive stance to prevent the further spread of an ideology, rather than seek its destruction. As John Lewis Gaddis observed, this placed American decision-makers in the role of responding to the actions of a formidable foe (1982, p. 43), a position that simultaneously enhances Hussein's stature and weakened the administration's ability to serve as the dominant agent of action. In an awkward historical analogy, the administration described Iraq in the same terms that earlier American presidents once reserved for the nuclear threat from the Soviet Union.

As the administration explained each current operation, their refusal to provide chronological assessments weakened the more orderly topical narrative and provided reporters with a line of potentially destabilizing questions. Secretary Perry's insistence that "We expect to see changes in behavior" (CNN, 1996a), was part of a pattern that

emphasized Hussein's importance in resolving the conflict, including Clinton's claim in February 1998 that "Hussein could end this crisis tomorrow" (February 17, 1998). Perry's successor as Defense Secretary, William Cohen, later removed any doubt concerning who drove the Administration's policy, "We're prepared to conduct future military operations, but that will depend on Saddam's actions" (December 19, 1998).

This view of a deeply entrenched Hussein stands in stark contrast to the weakened leader described by George H.W. Bush in the early days of 1991. As the administration positioned Hussein as the primary decision-maker, it left itself vulnerable to concerns about the indefinite extension of such operations; in its own words, Hussein controlled the tempo of future crises. Losing control of the narrative and engaged in a "slow-motion campaign" (Blanche, 1999) of 'routine' days of six to seven bombing runs, the administration found itself attempting to define creatively the success of this ongoing operation. Critics noted that the administration appeared willing "to let Iraq stew indefinitely" (Brzezinski, Z., Murphy, R., & Scowcroft, 1997, p. 22).

The conflict in temporal dimensions was on national display when during a Town Hall meeting, an audience member asked Secretary of Defense William Cohen, "How many times do we have to go through this before we take care of him the right way?" (Woodruff & Shaw, 1998). Cohen's reply reveals the tensions inherent in administration policy

> We have spent the past seven years containing Saddam Hussein with no loss of life to the American citizens. What we have to be concerned about is how long we are prepared to stay the course to make sure he doesn't develop weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological, which will pose a grave threat to your children and grandchildren (Woodruff & Shaw, 1998).

Even when confronted with a potentially sympathetic viewpoint, the administration extends the current threat indefinitely into the future, transforming the debate away from the number of operations toward an apparent need for cross-generational vigilance. How the administration attempted to define the movement between the current policy and future action is the subject of the next section.

Degradation as Chronological Discourse

Administration arguments in favor of containment did not solely rely on indefinite appeals. The Clinton administration's effort to justify the success of containment also included references to chronological markers; markers that encouraged discussion of how much progress containment was making. This next section examines the administration's own definition of success as a means of understanding the way linearity encroached on their thematic narrative.

Although the Bush administration noted a number of goals for the Persian Gulf War[12], it was the prevention of Iraqi development or use of weapons of mass destruction that emerged as a primary goal for the Clinton administration. Early references defined the basis of an Iraqi threat to regional security as "acts of aggression and his weapons of

mass destruction" (Clinton, 1994). Operations in 1993 and 1996 were justified on the basis of these acts of aggression; the WMD threat remained one of several lines of public argument. During 1998, WMD risks emerged as one of the primary threats from Iraq. At the Town Hall meeting, Secretary Cohen explained that military actions would be designed to, "significantly diminish Saddam's weapons of mass destruction -- the threat -- and reduce his ability to threaten his neighbors" (Woodruff & Shaw, 1998). By the end of year, goals of diminishing and reduction had been clarified into a single call during Clinton's explanation of the Desert Fox strikes, "They are designed to degrade Saddam Hussein's capacity to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction, and to degrade his ability to threaten his neighbors" (Clinton, December 16, 1998).

This dual goal would form an important element of the containment policy. Curiously, the central determinant of both of the Iraqi threats is qualified by efforts to 'degrade' them. In neither case did Clinton explicitly call for the removal of such a threat; they are presumed to continue, albeit in some reduced form. In the extensive Defense Department briefings during Desert Fox, senior military officers attempted to offer a more precise interpretation of how 'degradation' would be achieved. In response to media questions, Secretary Cohen offered the difference between diminishing and eliminating the threat as, "It's less than what he had before and we think significantly less than what was available before in terms of his capacity to move against his neighbors" (Cohen, December 19, 1998) and then proceeded to list a series of military resources that had been targeted by American strikes. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

General Hugh Shelton argued that degradation meant “to bring down his capabilities as much as much as we possibly can” but added the important clarification, that “The level will be determined by what your start point is” (Cohen, December 18, 1998), acknowledging that the divergent understandings of the size and scale of Iraqi’s WMD facilities would be central to evaluations of administration policy.

Determining that degradation was the primary goal of U.S. policy proved to be much easier than explaining it to the media. Daily Pentagon briefings emphasized the physical destruction wrought by strikes, but the difficulty of placing these strikes in a broader context produced an “apolitical and astrategic “Nintendo” view of warfare” (Cordesman, 1999, p. 21) where the destruction of any structure assumed some military importance. Defining the solution in terms of weakening Iraqi capabilities left the administration vulnerable to two prominent criticisms: an inability to determine the level of degradation and the inherent threat of Hussein’s weapons.

Media critics didn’t waste much time in belittling the new emphasis. Syndicated columnist William Safire explained the diminishment of US goals

> Our announced goal is now more modest: to "reduce" or "diminish" Saddam's production of germs and poison gases, with each verb propped up by the adverb "seriously." That goal was reduced to conform to the limited means the President is prepared to use: air strikes at suspected sites, pauses for negotiation, further punitive strikes when needed (February 19, 1998).

For Safire, the policy contained the seeds of its own failure, “the President made a strong argument for the need to destroy Saddam before he destroys millions. Then he asked for

support of his decision to wage halfway war, if necessary" (February 19, 1998). Halfway war, then, became the method to prevent regional crises. Any larger action, as Safire details, would have required a major investment of political currency and time, two elements a weakened and defensive presidency could not offer. Even with these limitations, the administration needed to maintain the credibility of the threat to use military force. Clinton developed the rationale for these decisions as part of a larger compromise between intentions and actions. Halfway war represented the best available compromise for the administration, a thoroughly practical arrangement based on American interests.

The construction of such a policy rekindles notions of the technocratic realism that Wander (1984) argues informed the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. This philosophy recognizes the inherent limitations of military action, and accordingly de-emphasizes quests for the moral superiority of one political system as it argues in favor of other forms of competition (pp. 349-350). Management, rather than ideology, emerges as the dominant rationale for and course of action. In this shift, competition, usually economic, supplants military actions as the primary site of confrontation. When Johnson attempted to extend his war on poverty to the Vietnam conflict, specifically offering a series of dam projects along the Mekong Delta, he advocated a managerial perspective in which the economic assistance would weaken the pressures for military hostilities. In this view, national opponents become competitors more than mortal foes and the war is not, "seen as a crusade, but as an instrument of policy" (Stuckey, 1992, p. 249).

This managerial model of foreign policy rhetoric demands some measurement of its actions. The rejection of moral crusades implies that such action is unwarranted, at least in part, because of its lack of appropriateness to the current task. Managerial approaches, however, draw strength from incremental successes and therefore lend themselves to a variety of quantitative indicators. The Department of Defense under Lyndon Johnson formally defined success through measures of effectiveness (MOE), which included the body count of North Vietnamese casualties. For Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, such a standard provided a means of measuring the decline in the North Vietnamese will to continue the war (Murray, 2001, p. 136). In much the same way as the media reacted to battle damage assessments during Desert Fox, these MOE gained stature as the administration's test of the war's success, even as the tremendous human cost of such a conflict became increasingly evident.

Even though the military no longer utilizes body counts as a public indicator of success,[13] the employment of a similar managerial model required that the Defense Department provide a quantifiable means of evaluating operational success. Alfred Crosby (1997) contends that the tremendous appeal of quantification "snaps the lock" on the ritualistic nature of contemporary western culture (p. 145). Although no term has emerged to replace body counts as the moniker of American technical management, the practice of counting air sorties, the rate of mission success and the amount of targets destroyed appeared prominently in media criticism. *The Washington Times* drew the parallel

> Vietnam without the body bags? The Iraqi campaign is becoming eerily reminiscent of America's failure in Vietnam. The no-fly zones have been in effect since the early 1990s, roughly as long as U.S. ground troops were deployed to Vietnam. In Southeast Asia, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and his Pentagon whiz-kids fell prey to the body bag fallacy by presuming dead enemy soldiers equaled success. In Southwest Asia, the sortie syndrome has taken root, with Clinton officials presuming that a high number of missions flown somehow equals success. But mechanistic calculations invariably fail to measure what matters most: the enemy's willingness to absorb punishment. In Iraq, as in Vietnam, the enemy's pain threshold is very high. (Anderson, October 21, 1999).

Although 'sortie syndrome' did not emerge as a buzzword, the importance of labeling the number of missions flown as an indicator of some larger success stands at the heart of Clinton's technocratic realism. The logic of the ever-increasing missions have should produced some determinant of the 'degradation' of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Yet as Richard Newman of *US News and World Report* argued, "target takedowns" may not represent any change in the functional capacity of Iraq to use its military arsenal (1998).

The distinction between inflicting physical damage and their political and strategic effects is at the heart of the second primary criticism, whether or not Hussein's very presence posed the ultimate danger to the region (Cordesman, 1999, p. 1). As Cordesman explains, Desert Fox was not designed to succeed through physical destruction, instead "it had to be a political battle where the primary goal was to later Iraqi perceptions and actions" (1999, p. 27). This strategy of attempting to influence Hussein's decision-making appeared to beg the question of whether US policy was designed to remove Hussein, a source of some confusion within the administration.

A number of key administration officials appeared at odds with regard to the importance of Hussein's future to American policy. Secretary of State Madeline Albright publicly called for a "regime change" (Perlez, 1999) and Clinton explained that, "So long as Saddam remains in power he will remain a threat to his people, his region and the world" (December 19, 1998). This view was inconsistent with other statements, including Secretary of Defense William Cohen's Town Hall debate commentary that ruled out the policy of removing Hussein from power (Woodruff & Shaw, 1999), a position he repeated during Desert Fox, "The goal is not to destabilize the regime" (December 16, 1998).

Although both Clinton and Johnson articulated their view of technocratic realism from very different perspectives, both came to rely on elements of the competitor framework to resolve their conflicts. The administration's emphasis on changing the behavior of Hussein demonstrated that the fundamental American concern exists with his behavior, not him. If only Iraq was no longer "out of compliance" with international accords, the administration would support the removal of economic sanctions (Clinton, February 16, 1999). This legal perspective encouraged a separation of Iraq's intentions from its actions; as long as Hussein made policy changes, Iraq could return to the community of nations.

Viewed against the administration's own conflicting interpretations of Hussein, mainstream media outlets questioned the wisdom of such a policy. *Newsweek* asked readers to, "Note the verbs: contain, weaken, degrade, reduce -- not kill; not destroy"

(Elliot, December 28, 1998) and "asked If Saddam Hussein is, truly, "very, very bad," why not finish the job?" (Elliot, December 28, 1998). Brett Stephens, the assistant editorial-features editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, found no redeeming element of the Desert Fox, describing it as an "appalling failure" (1999), in which Hussein "emerged unscathed and politically emboldened (1999). Steven Lee Myers of *The New York Times* argued that the operations precluded any inspections by the United Nations and "Mr. Hussein is as defiant as ever" (1998). Despite, and perhaps because of, the inclination toward measuring the conflict critics were left wondering what was ultimately accomplished. In perhaps the most detailed analysis yet produced of American policy toward Iraq, Cordesman concluded, "Desert Fox did not change most of Iraq's military capabilities" (1999, p. xxiii). The administration produced measurements of its containment policy that, even if successful on their own terms, ultimately weakened the configurational narrative.

Conclusion - Endgame?

These rhetorical challenges must be considered as just that, challenges that the administration generally overcame. The Clinton administration left office with Iraq still led by Saddam Hussein and a military policy that enjoyed public support. When the administration confronted Iraq, it generally received a boost in its public approval ratings, beginning when Clinton attacked in 1993 and his approval ratings increased eleven points (Jehl, 1993). Even as the impeachment controversy threatened to overtake Washington,

four major polls revealed close to seventy-five percent of the public supported the decision to attack Iraq (Schemann, 1998). When Senator Majority Leader Trent Lott insinuated that Clinton's political problems might have motivated him to "Wag the Dog" a nearly identical sixty-seven percent felt that his comments were inappropriate (Lacayo, 1998).

Even through these challenges did not become a major political crisis, this does not remove concerns about the construction of such a policy. This chapter explains how the grounding for the construction of the Iraqi threat remains potentially unstable. Even the supportive public found in national polls appears to have lowered its expectations for operations, finding that although three-quarters of those surveyed supported air strikes in 1998, only forty-one percent believed that the strikes would actually interfere with Iraq's production of weapons of mass destruction (Schemann, 1998). These operations also claimed no American lives and therefore illustrate a ceiling of possible support for strikes that the public views to be 'painless.'

This discussion complicates those assessments of the tremendous success of Bush's efforts to justify the Gulf War (Mitchell, 2000 & Kellner, 1992). Even though administrations maintain the ability to develop prominent scripts, this chapter explores the potential weaknesses of those scripts as they are repeated in later performances. A particular set of appeals may work in response to a specific crisis, but as similar crises repeat, administrations should remain cautious about the ability to maintain a privileged construction of time in their history of events.

Within the fragments of the administration's rhetoric, critics may discover traces of an oppositional rhetoric nurtured by the logic of the administration's own public campaign. A central tenet of Clinton's managerial rhetoric has been the enforcement of an economic sanctions regime. The post-Gulf War era international order included a comprehensive program of economic sanctions designed to deny imports of many industrial products and to limit the export of Iraqi oil. These methods provide the international community with a means of regulating Iraq's access to hard currency, but they also limit the size and scope of the Iraqi economy. According to several international estimates, restrictions on food and medicinal supplies have claimed the lives of more than two million Iraqi people *since* the Gulf War ended (Simons, p. xiii). The World Health Organization estimates that between 5,000 and 7,000 children die each month from the sanctions (Simon, p. 12).

In December 1998, Clinton argued that the United States, "will sustain what have been among the most extensive sanctions in U.N. history" sanctions he estimated that cost Iraq more than $120 billion (December 19, 1998). Even as the administration highlights a limited exception that allows Iraq to receive some foreign goods, Clinton surrenders any claim that the sanctions are not a central feature of coalition policy. As the technocratic realist model continues to seek assessments of the Iraq policy, measurement of the sanctions' impact provide evidence for a counter-script. These elements form the basis of an oppositional rhetoric that, buoyed by the administration's own chronological efforts to assess the policy, weighs the benefits of continued 'degradation' against the

costs in American tax dollars, estimated at $100 million per month (Anderson, 1999), and in Iraqi lives.

The 1998 Town Hall Meeting about Iraq demonstrated how such a rhetoric might be articulated. The administration's decision to send three of its most prominent international experts, Cohen, Albright, and Berger, to Ohio State University for a televised discussion about Iraq, appeared to be a perfect forum for the administration to clarify its position and receive the traditional 'rally around the flag' rise in public support. Throughout the program, however, protestors repeatedly interrupted the panel with chants of "One, two, three, four, we don't want your racist war" (Woodruff & Shaw, 1998) and audience members asked for explanations in light of perceived inconsistencies with American policy toward Indonesia and Israel. Even though many audience members remained generally supportive, the presence of a vocal opposition divided in the crowd and the verbal confrontations between audience members and Secretary of State Albright evoked the most lasting images of angry youths clashing with government officials over military policy (Woodruff & Shaw, 1998).

Despite valiant efforts to redefine the event, most notably labors to cite the demonstrations as proof of the vibrant American democracy, the event appeared as a setback for the administration (Woodruff & Shaw, 1998). An ABC News poll recorded a five percent drop in support for the administration's policy after the event, and news anchor Peter Jennings offered, "the Administration took it right between the eyes" (ABC News). *The New York Times*, described it as a "fascinating barometer of a country

divided" (Bennett, 1998) and noted that, "There were moments during the 90-minute town meeting in the Ohio State basketball arena that were eerily reminiscent of the protests and passions generated by the Vietnam War" (Bennett, 1998), before concluding "Mr. Clinton still has a good deal of explaining and convincing to do (Bennet, 1998). Despite, and maybe in some part because of, the seven intervening years between Operation Desert Storm and the Town Hall meeting, Clinton still needed to 'explain' and 'convince' the public.

The possibility of this confrontational rhetoric is further supported by Jeffrey Walsh's (1997) discussion of how the reinterpretation of national memory surrounding the Gulf War, specifically through works of popular culture, could provide new interpretations that explain why the allied coalition 'liberated Kuwait' (pp. 219-220). The release of the Warner Brothers production, *Three Kings*, provides one early effort, especially as it emphasizes American neglect of the Kurds in the closing days of the war and invites the audience to reexamine the economic motives that led to war. The political sensitivity of such concerns remained strong enough in 1998 to convince Warner Brothers executives to consider scrapping the film (Nashawaty, 27).

The potential loss of control over a war script poses a series threat to an administration. Cal Logue and James Patton's (1982) examination of both administration and of anti-Vietnam discourse concludes that a redefinition of the administration's view of US action specifically, and the war more generally, allowed antiwar voices precious terrain to undermine Lyndon Johnson's appeals. The parallel seems plausible; if the

public were to view American strikes as part of a broader campaign against Iraqi civilians, instead of as weapons degradation, perhaps the tenor of the discourse might change. The inability to articulate a singular view of temporality and the need to impose managerial standards of success provide the foundation for the ascendance of oppositional rhetoric.

A final note of caution is found in Robert Ivie's (1996) warning that American war rhetoric operates from a position of fear because the essential weakness of American ideology, hubris, could be revealed (pp. 172-173). If administrations insist on presenting the defenses of military operations wrapped in the language of humanitarian concern for others, even as they impose a technocratic scheme that, over time, demands human measurement of its 'success,' the potential remains that such an appeal will be confronted by claims of economic imperialism. British journalist Geoff Simons offers insights from such an alternate perspective,

> I remember private discussions and public debates about the perpetration and nature of past genocides; in particular, about the Holocaust. How could such things have been allowed to happen? . . . .Did literate and educated publics really know nothing of what was happening? How are we to avoid such human catastrophes, such moral and legal derelictions in high places, in the future? Today, in contemplation of such matters, we do not need to make imaginative leaps into the past . . . With the example of what is being perpetrated in 1990s Iraq we are all contemporaries of genocide (pp. 249-250).

The unique exigence of extended crises encourages critics to examine those appeals that are employed in complex and prolonged military confrontations. The next chapter carries out that task in the context of operations in Somalia.

CHAPTER 4

EXPLAINING SOMALIA

> The men who have seen and fought this war know that the enemy can be quickly defeated – and, they cannot understand why victory has been forbidden. Again and again the question was the same: "Why don't they let us win, and get this dammed thing over?"
>
> --- Wallis Wood, 1969

> It's always the same. Young men are sent on senseless missions without decent planning … The failure can usually be traced to blind leadership. But it's the soldiers who pay the price.
>
> --- David Hackworth, 1993

Introduction

If, as this project has so far argued, dominant representations of American political identity embrace battlefield successes as evidence of the righteousness of American ideals, then how can such a system survive a defeat? Without victory, what is left of the divine role for the great democratic experiment? This chapter attempts to answer these questions by looking at those moments when the idealistic representations of American ideology are forced to deal with the image of defeated American soldiers. In each of the other case studies, rhetorical dimensions of American foreign policy are examined as examples of building support for a new operation or maintaining support for an ongoing operation. Without defeat, it is unlikely that a dramatic contrast between lofty

policy goals and the consequences of those actions will ever be exposed. In defeat, however, war discourse must offer a redemptive explanation for the lost American lives. As the opening quotations suggest, such a narrative appears over thirty years of popular culture; a narrative that blames cowardly leadership.

This chapter examines the most prominent American military tragedy during the 1990s as a means of exploring the ways in which responsibility for the American defeat in Vietnam has been incorporated into privileged interpretations of American political identity. Specifically, the chapter explores the designation of responsibility for the October 1993 raid in Mogadishu, Somalia as an example of how culpability for defeat becomes the exclusive purview of civilian authority. The chapter is divided into three sections. First, it explores popular and scholarly reviews of the Battle of Mogadishu, the dramatic encounter that led to the conclusion of Operation Restore, in an effort to determine where responsibility for the failure was placed. Unlike previous research, instead of explaining how media images produced America's role, this chapter employs the rhetoric of Vietnam as a broader context to consider the importance of questions about the competence of civilian authority. The next section conducts a reading of the popular discourse of the operation, examining the primary strategies used to attribute responsibility for the raid to Secretary of Defense Les Aspin. Finally, the chapter examines the representations of Aspin and those of retired General Colin Powell, as an effort to interpret the vitality of civilian control over the military. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the importance of examining military discourse through a

perspective that recognizes the important presumption of civilian control over the military.

Reviewing Somalia: Pictures, Savages, and Heroism

The dramatic confrontation between Somali and American forces in October 1993 has occupied an important place in contemporary accounts of American foreign policy. Occurring almost simultaneously with crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Haiti, the fight seemed to prove that the Clinton administration lacked control over its operations. The broad distribution of two sets of graphic pictures of the desecration of American casualties proved a watershed for administration critics and provided some of the most indelible images of the post-Vietnam era. In the past few years a resurgence of scholarly and popular critics have turned attention back to Somalia. This section explores three important perspectives that have been used to understand the cultural implications of the operation: the dominance of visual imagery, the rhetoric of savagery, and the emphasis on the valor of the American troops. This section explores each of these approaches and suggests that even though each strengthens our understanding of the event, they fail to address the important issue of blame for the operation.

The first perspective locates much of the operation's importance in the dominance of those pictures of American casualties and how they affected the American political consciousness. No review of the television, newspaper and newsmagazine coverage of the event can ignore the prominent role that these graphic images played. These images

were so powerful that the photo of Chief Warrant Officer Michael Durant, bruised and captive, appeared as the October 18th cover for *Time, Newsweek* and *US News & World Report*. David Perlmutter (1998) argues that visual icons, or photographic images that function metaphorically to provide a broader meaning, dominated the events that led Americans to intervene in and withdraw from Somalia. The images of starving Somalis functioned as icons of starvation, providing a compelling human cost to opponents of intervention (Perlmutter, p. 94). Ultimately, however, these icons were contrasted with the images of jubilant Somalis, dancing on downed American helicopters and parading the corpses of American soldiers (Perlmutter, p. 115).

Cori Dauber (2001) conducts a broad review of the power of visual imagery in American operations and concludes that the construction of popular horror as a reaction to the Somalia mission plays a still dominant role in the decision when and how to deploy American military force (p. 670). Dauber's work specifically articulates the military's concern for the presence of American bodies as a potential threat to public support. Dauber and Perlmutter's work adds to a growing body of literature that examines a range of theories associated with the importance of media imagery in the production of national government policy, emphasizing the 'CNN effect' and related examples of the media's ability to spur action or inaction by national governments. Increasingly this work complicates, and in some cases, repudiates the traditional conception that media imagery produces national decision-making[14].

This literature, however, concedes that the production of meaning for these events can be located through images and relevant rhetorical strategies. Both Dauber and Perlmutter, for example, help to explain the role of images in providing meaning for the Battle of Mogadishu, but they also conclude that the broader rhetorical climate must be examined in order to consider fully the import of such an event. Perlmutter notes that Clinton's public statements largely ceded the definition of the mission's importance to his political opponents (1998, p. 115). Moving beyond the specific imagery, Perlmutter cautions that "even when a picture has some power to influence, that influence is largely due to contextual factors" (1998, p. 121).

Dauber provides another important caution: the context of each contemporary military action must be situated within the larger historical narrative. In this case, she argues that the American defeat in Vietnam remains a necessary antecedent to any thorough examination of the operation in Somalia. This analysis identifies the prominence of the perceived effects of the images on the American public as a central element of media coverage, especially when contrasted to the utter lack of agency attributed to the U.S. government in Clinton's Somalia rhetoric (2001, pp. 667-668). Dauber also recognizes that the images provided Clinton with a number of options, including his eventual decision to reinforce American forces and open negotiations with Mohammed Farrah Aidid (p. 669), even as Aidid's role in the attack became well known. Dauber's work is a powerful step in challenging the notion that graphic images alone produce interpretations of historical events. This chapter attempts to extend this analysis

by accepting the importance of the Vietnam War in creating a rhetorical climate and by moving beyond images themselves and toward the linguistic characterizations of the events.

The second frame critics have used to analyze the rhetorical strategies employed by the Clinton administration emphasizes the rearticulation of traditional American war rhetoric. Building on Robert Ivie's (1980; 1974) exploration of the rhetoric of savagery, John Butler examines the administration's efforts to develop a coherent narrative that could explain the past events and help support a new policy. Although Butler contends that rhetorical continuities surpass the generic concerns of war rhetoric, this research explores the particular rearticulation of a savagery based appeal that finds its expression not in the evil of a particular person, but in the 'primitive' nature of Somali society (p. 12).

Butler contends that, "Clinton succeeded in invoking a powerful impulse whose species has yet to be documented" (pp. 11-12), but addresses such rhetorical force in the context of rearticulation of 19th century imperialism. Although the parallel does provide for an interesting comparison, it fails to address the importance of contextualizing Somalia within 20th century articulations of defeat. Butler's search for a more complex notion of savagery attempts to describe an ideology that justifies American actions, but it does little to explain who is responsible for the betrayal of those ideals, evidenced by American corpses.

These scholarly views must be considered alongside Mark Bowden's series of investigative reports for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* as another crucial source of interpretation. Bowden's accounts of the operation were collected as the 1999 National Book Award finalist, *Black Hawk Down*, and it inspired a major film production of the same name, directed by Ridley Scott and produced by Jerry Bruckheimer. As a crucial first draft of history, Bowden's reports have become an inescapable source of information regarding the raid itself. Although other journalists have described the events,[15] Bowden has received a great deal of exposure from not only the book and movie, but also from a dedicated web site[16] sponsored by *The Philadelphia Inquirer.* The site includes not only each chapter, but also a series of interviews with principals from the operation, allowing Bowden's work to make minor corrections and enhance its legitimacy as the primary source of publicly available information about the raid.

In Bowden's work, it is the individual American soldiers that are the primary characters. Although the book and movie contain brief references to the background of the operation, it is the battle itself that occupies the vast majority of the storyline. Bowden explains

> Every battle is a drama played out apart from broader political issues. Soldiers cannot concern themselves with the decisions that bring them to a fight. They trust their leaders not to risk their lives for too little. Once the battle is joined, they fight to survive, to kill before they are killed. The story of a battle is timeless. It is about the same things whether in Troy or Gettysburg, Normandy or the Ia Drang. It is about soldiers, most of them young, trapped in a fight to the death. The extreme and terrible nature of war touches something essential about being human, and soldiers do not always like what they learn (November 16, 1997).

This timeless divorce of the heroism of individual soldiers from the political decision-making that led them to conflict is a primary theme of the film adaptation that adopted the subtitle 'Leave No Man Behind.' Film critics noted the film's primacy of individual heroism, contending that surviving members of the Rangers saw it as "an opportunity for vindication" (Kaus) contained within what "may be the most relentlessly in-your-face war film ever produced" (Beifuss).

Bowden's work has dramatically shaped popular understandings of the operation, yet his near-total emphasis on the American soldiers and their harrowing mission has yet to be critically explored in the context of determining responsibility. Most of the negative commentary about the film emphasized the simplicity of Somali characters and the lack of contextual information,[17] but little of the criticism asks what is left behind when the film only allows the audience to view the operation through the soldier's perspective. *The New York Times'* Nicholas Kristof (2002) does examine the film in light of the political 'lesson,' but ultimately provides additional support for Dauber's work on the construction of these events as powerful evidence for the hypothesis that the American public will resist any American military casualties. These criticisms, however, ignore the powerful manner in which the film represented the individual members of the Armed Forces as heroic, capable of rising above the crisis not of their making.

The Washington Post's Elizabeth Snead notes that "millions of moviegoers will see those bloody hours painted as a triumph, at least for the soldiers," (2002) a goal that Bowden and others associated with the film repeat in media interviews. From the

perspective of the Defense Department, the film offers compelling testimony to the character of the armed forces. Consider Secretary of the Army Paul White's synthesis of the war against terrorism with the film in his comments after a special screening for military and civilian leaders,

> The movie has a tagline, 'Leave no man behind,' which is extremely important today. That tagline could easily be used by the Army because it reflects the values of valor and self-sacrifice that we have been seeing in our soldiers these past four months as we combat terrorists and terrorism. In fact, those values have been an integral part of the Army during the entire 226 years of its existence (Burlas).

These values that White argued are integral to the Army, and by extension the American military, are as offered as an implicit contrast to those held by the leadership that designed and advocated the operation. This effort to explain the conflict solely in terms of the success and valor of the tactical operation begs the question of what else was in error to have produced such a horrible outcome. The next section looks for answers in America's war in Vietnam.

The Noble Grunt & Civilian Authority

David Hackworth's opening frustration with the failures of blind leadership carries a certain echo with Wallis Wood's 1969 frustration with the war in Vietnam. Neither espouses a traditionally liberal argument against the morality of their respective conflicts; in both cases, the inability to complete the mission successfully is the primary objection. In these perspectives, American soldiers would have been victorious if not for

restraints placed by their own leadership. This binary between soldier and authority can be understood through Pat Aufderheide's (1990) work on the 'noble grunts' of Vietnam War films, soldiers called to fight a war that they cannot win. Aufderheide contends that this binary allows the American failure in Vietnam to be more easily placed with traditional understandings of American identity. These representations situate the individual solder, or grunt, in the midst of the unimaginably chaotic wartime environment and explain that their difficulties are compounded by the decision making of nervous bureaucrats, miles away from Vietnam's dense jungles (p. 93). The young men remain powerless to control their own destiny, forced to abandon goals of success and instead simply attempt to survive (p. 84).

This explanation, sometimes described as the betrayal theory, lays the humiliating defeat squarely at the feet of those civilians who imposed restrictions like the rules of engagement that limited American forces from pursuing North Vietnamese troops beyond Vietnam's territorial boundaries. Stephen Vlastos summarizes this perspective, "timorous civilians in the White House and Pentagon paralyzed by fears of provoking China and the Soviet Union ultimately caused America's defeat in Vietnam" (p. 69). The salience of this perspective in contemporary America cannot be understated. Much as the fictional John Rambo demanded a free hand to wage war, discussed in chapter one, this explanation provides the warrant behind Ronald Reagan's claim that Vietnam was a 'noble cause' (Vlastos, p. 68). It gained a scholarly endorsement after the Brookings Institution's Leslie Gelb and Richard Betts' (1979) concluded that the United States

actually accomplished the stated goal of its Vietnam policy, preventing the South from falling to Communist hands for 20 years. Instead of the accepting that the Vietnamese successfully resisted American military power, this interpretation finds America's true enemies in Lyndon Johnson's gathering of 'wise men'.

The explanation has become a prominent theme in debates over later military operations. Oliver North's explained his actions in the Iran-Contra scandal as acts of patriotism designed to fight this brand of weak-willed authority. Consider the John Birch Society's John F. McManus' reaction to North's testimony before Congress,

> The Vietnam War would have been won in a matter of weeks any time U.S. leaders gave the word … But the advocates of accommodation and defeat prevailed. And they are still in charge (1987).

From Oliver North to Charlie Sheen's Chris Taylor in *Platoon*, prominent representations of American soldiers argued that if only the civilian authorities would display any common sense, the American military would be infinitely more successful. The transferal of this grunt vs. authority frame into so many popular representations of warfare offers support for just how much it resonates within popular culture.

These popular presentations, like *Platoon* and the *Rambo* films, position individual soldiers as the central actors and contrast them with nearly invisible, but always dangerous, bureaucratic leaders who callously place the troops in danger. These representations help to explain who is responsible for defeat, but they also allow audiences to identify with the troops. If these narratives help to transform national identities into a national identity, then the position of the audience must be homogenized;

for example, they share a sense of betrayal toward those incompetent civilian authorities. Marita Sturken (1997) contends that these representations allow audiences to experience this unified role and, alongside the grunts, reenact the debates over responsibility for the Vietnam War. This time, however, the blame is easily assigned.

This betrayal theory has become widely accepted in popular culture, but the degree to which this lesson has fueled a disdain for civilian authority remains highly controversial. Richard Kohn's 1994 article in *The National Interest* argued that the century long tradition of civilian control over the military was no longer secure and ignited a substantial scholarly debate over the magnitude of this crisis[18]. Little ground currently exists to reconcile differing assessments of just how much civilian control has weakened. Kohn (2001) continues to argue that this control is threatened (p. 1), but other researchers claim the evidence that Kohn and others provide is more indicative of a predictable window of tension (Gibson & Snider, pp. 1-2). Lindsay Cohn's review of this debate notes that the "literature relies to a great extent on anecdotes and reflections based on personal exposure to the military" (1999, p. 14). Kohn concedes that interpretative problems plague the controversy, arguing that a difficulty in interpreting the degree to which civilian control is threatened is a substantial methodological problem (2001, p. 1).

This chapter attempts to insert a new methodological perspective into this debate. Much of the existing literature argues for or against the specific level of hostility from the military toward civilian authority, but ignores questions of how the broader populace interprets the debate. This section attempts to explore the vitality of the presumption that

civilian authorities should exercise control of the armed forces, an assumption that if disproven would certainly indicate problems for the long-term balance of civilian and military authority. If popular representations of contemporary foreign policy events support an atrophied view of civilian control, then perhaps critics should revisit the long-term 'health' of the doctrine of civilian authority.

Kohn explains that, although the principle of civilian control remains imbedded in the armed forces, changes in how the principle is exercised pose a danger for the republic (2001, p. 9). Kohn articulates three distinct elements of this change, which can be utilized as an interpretative frame for the debate over the Somalia operation. The first element concerns the military's increasingly partisan and conservative political orientation. (Kohn, 2001, p. 9). Public expressions of this partisan affiliation disrupt the long-standing principle that the military should largely remain apolitical and indistinguishable from larger American society. Kohn argues that a related, but distinct area of concern, is the military belief that civilian culture has become corrupt and morally debased, citing a Triangle Institute for Security Studies report that found almost 90 percent of elite military officers agreed that the decline of traditional values played a role in the weakening of American social fabric (Kohn, p. 11). The final element locates a rupture not when senior military officers disagree with DOD policy, but when they actively resist those policies, by confronting civilian authorities, acting to sabotage the policy, or speaking out in public (2001, p. 11). The next section rereads the media coverage of the Battle of Mogadishu in light of the debate over this issue.

Revisiting the Media Coverage: Representations of Civilian Responsibility

In the previously reviewed works, no examination of the media coverage directly explores where culpability for the raid was established. This section briefly establishes that Les Aspin was depicted as largely responsible for the loss of life, before examining the implications of such a representation. The Somalia story unfolded like many breaking news stories. Little information was available at first, just the details about a raid in Somalia that had led to the deaths of several American servicemen. On October 4, 1993, much national news coverage was focused on the conclusion of a showdown between Boris Yeltsin and his political enemies in the Russian White House, but the news of American casualties and missing soldiers was building momentum. The Clinton administration attempted to maintain a sense of control over the events, arguing that a policy review was under way and that reinforcements would be deployed, but the magnitude of the crisis engulfed these efforts at damage control (Jennings, October 4, 1993; Devroy, October 7, 1993). Congressional condemnation was featured prominently in most news broadcasts, from Senator Robert Byrd's concern for dragging out the "these fatal cops-and-robber operations" (Jennings) to Senator John McCain's rebuttal of the administration's reinforcement strategy because sending "250 or 500 at a time, smacks of, of course, the days of the Vietnam, the early days" (Roberts).

As more details of the operation became public, including the capture of Durant and the inability to reinforce or rescue the wounded soldiers for several hours, the demand for accountability grew. *Newsweek's* Michael Elliot noted, "The heavy toll has

led official Washington into a frantic search for scapegoats" (October 18, 1993). Although a number of different targets were implicated, the importance of the decision not to send additional armored vehicles became the central action that demanded accountability[19]. Clinton's decision to provide additional troops and heavy armor only highlighted the perceived weaknesses of past American deployment. Pentagon officials were quoted as saying the reason that the armor was going there now was because the "battlefield equation" had changed, supported by Clinton's determination that "I am just not satisfied that the American soldiers that are there have the protection they need under the present circumstances (Clayton, October 5, 1993). *The New York Times* clarified the importance of this detail, claiming that the commander of U.S. forces, Major General Thomas Montgomery, had sent an urgent request for heavily armored M1-1A1 tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles, only to be denied because the Pentagon feared that Congress would object (Apple, October 5, 1993). This ambiguous description of a Pentagon denial for the request would quickly become Aspin's mistake.

As the armor decision gained prominence in media reports, Aspin appeared unable to assist the administration defend its Somalia policy. After Aspin and Secretary of State Warren Christopher were sent to meet with Congress in a closed-door session, the criticism of Aspin only mounted. *The Washington Post* described the secretaries as being "pummeled by lawmakers" (Devroy, October 7, 1993) and *The Boston Globe* noted "Members of Congress privately spoke angrily of what they called Aspin's rambling,

unfocused presentation of the administration's options in Somalia" (Kranish & Curtius, October 7, 1993).

Within days several members of Congress called for Aspin's resignation (Kranish, October 8, 1993). As Aspin explained that he believed he was considering a logistical request, admitting that, "Had I known at that time what I knew after the event of Sunday, I would have made a very different decision" (Kranish, October 8, 1993), the administration began to distance itself from its own Secretary of Defense. Clinton spokesperson Dee Dee Myers argued that, "she did not believe Clinton was aware that such a request had been made or that it had been turned down" (Kranish & Curtius, October 7, 1993). As congressional committees debated the merits of future American policy, the details of the request became public and Aspin's culpability became entrenched.[20]

By the end of October, Aspin was frequently described as chiefly responsible for the disaster. Describing him as the "focus of scorn over [the] Somalia debacle" *Time* declared Aspin as a weekly loser (October 18, 1993). *The Chicago Sun-Times* explained that Aspin "was forced to accept blame" (November 17, 1993) and *USA Today* concurred, noting "Aspin has shouldered most of the blame" (Komarow, October 20, 1993). The debate appeared resolved when on December 15th Aspin tendered his resignation and within twenty-four hours Clinton announced that he would nominate Retired Admiral Bobby Inman as the new Secretary of Defense. Michael Gordon of *The New York Times* explained that the quick naming of a replacement meant the move had

been planned for weeks (December 17, 1993). As syndicated columnist Mark Shields noted on The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, "Aspin is quickly becoming in this administration the "one size fits all" scapegoat for everything" (MacNeil & Lehrer, December 17, 1993). For much of the later mass media discussion of the Somalia operation, responsibility had been fixed squarely on Les Aspin, summarized by a report from *Bloomberg News*, "The secretary had American blood on his hands" (December 14, 1993).

The wide distribution of the Aspin as responsible thesis may not appear to carry much cultural importance; after all, most military analysts would likely find it uncontroversial that the Secretary of Defense should maintain control over the very agency that he or she was appointed to manage. This chapter argues that implications of Aspin's culpability are found not in the importance of additional armor for that operation, but in the manner in which Aspin was represented in the mass media.[21] This section explores how Aspin was presented after the Battle of Mogadishu as an important signal in the controversy over civilian control of the military.

Kohn's first sign of weakened civilian authority is the acceptance of an increasingly partisan military. This Republican dominated military expresses concerns about a 'culture war' between the largely liberal society and the more traditional military (Kohn 2001, p. 11). The placement of the Secretary of Defense within one of the cultural circles is an important assessment of whether they are more closely aligned with those

noble grunts or incompetent bureaucrats. Aspin became personified as a central player in this cultural conflict, a liberal outsider who was not part of the organization he directed.

The official Defense Department biography of Aspin, as published on Defense Link, provides a full list of the reasons why Aspin did not conform to traditional military culture. Describing his early congressional tenure as that of an "outsider," Aspin is further remembered for opposing the war in Vietnam and often issuing press releases critical of the armed forces (Defense Link). Aspin was also remembered for proposing a defense budget that "worried the military" and favoring the use of U.S. troops in regional conflicts, in direct conflict with "other decisionmakers, including General Powell" (Defense Link). Aspin was also remembered for an inability to manage successfully policies on the "social side," namely the controversies over sexual orientation and military service and restrictions on women in combat.

This list of faults provides an outline for media descriptions of Aspin. At each turn, Aspin is clearly presented as anathema to the military. *The New York Times*, in its announcement of Aspin's 1995 death noted that he was elected to Congress "in large part because of his opposition to the war in Vietnam and in his early years he was an outspoken critic of the Pentagon" (Rosenbaum, May 22, 1995). Another news organization noted that the culture gap hampered Aspin's effectiveness, a problem he appeared to accentuate because "The military values personal loyalties and friendships … he is more comfortable with memos than with people" (Bloomberg News, December 14, 1993).

Aspin's problems with military culture appear to stem from his lack of military service. On *MacNeil/Lehrer,* former U.S. ambassador to West Germany Richard Burt explained the importance of Aspin's background

> Les was very much a civilian defense intellectual. He wanted to replace civilian intelligentsia with, with military judgment. He wanted, he wanted the Pentagon to be run by defense intellectuals from Harvard (December 17, 1993).

Aspin apparently brought these intellectuals with him to the Defense Department. *Newsweek* argued, "some of his recruits arrived with a grudge against anyone in uniform" (Barry, December 27, 1993). The distinction between the values espoused by academics and the values necessary in the military were summarized by *U.S. News's* Bruce Auster and Greg Ferguson, "A sharp analyst, he lacks the elusive ability to lead" (December 6, 1993). His preference for non-uniformed personnel and his anti-Vietnam War background combined to present Aspin as firmly entrenched within the liberal tradition of the Democratic Party. In many ways, Aspin embodied many of the professional flaws that President Clinton did, but his daily responsibility to direct the military magnified their impact leading *Newsweek* to remark "Aspin, verbose and academic, came across like Clinton, only more so" (Barry, December 27, 1993). On CNN's *Larry King Live* retired Colonel Larry Joyce, whose son Sergeant Casey Joyce was killed in the raid, summarized the argument that Aspin did not belong

> Well, of course, but you put someone in charge of the military who understands the military, who has an empathy and understanding for the military. Les Aspin has been a critic of the military for as long as I can remember. The man made a career of ridiculing and reviling the military. To put Les Aspin in charge of the military makes about as much sense as putting an atheist as a bishop (King, October 14, 1993).

In these assessments, Aspin became a wallflower within the military establishment. Despite apparently possessing the necessary intellectual gifts, his past demonstrated that he did not belong within the expectations of contemporary military culture. Once established as distinct from the military, it is next necessary to explore what separates these two cultures.

Kohn explains that a primary division between the two cultural groups is the dominance of traditional values, such as honor, trust, and loyalty. The failure of civilian society to continue to cherish these beliefs is viewed as proof that civilian society is increasingly immoral and corrupt. Aspin was presented as someone who presented the worst side of civilian society: weak and indecisive, unwilling to support a consistent set of ideological beliefs. If his past and party affiliation provided one concern, his weakness and incompetence provided another.

Columnist Otis Pike contended that Aspin's intellectual style combined with an inability to act decisively: "Tough decisions affecting the lives of people in the military were not his thing" (December 18, 1993). When controversial matters such as the ban on gays in the military surfaced, "Aspin tried to be on both sides … he waffled" (December 18, 1993). The image of Aspin as a confused administrator appeared throughout the

coverage. *The St. Petersburg Times* mentioned his "chaotic management style" and "rambling indecisiveness" (December 17, 1993), Bloomberg News argued that the "Somalia crisis hardened the perception of Aspin as a stumbling manager" (December 14, 1993) and R.W. Apple noted his "habitual tardiness" (June 14, 1995).

Aspin's perceived inability to manage the Pentagon provided only part of the larger representation of Aspin as undisciplined, a fundamental problem in a military organization, not to mention in a culture that places a high value on self-control. Comments about Aspin's appearance and personal habits may appear unusual, except when viewed from the perspective of the cultural importance of slenderness. Susan Bordo's (1993; 1999) examination of the cultural implications of the body helps to explain the significance of characterizations of Aspin as undisciplined in his physical appearance. Bordo maintains that slenderness is culturally loaded as vehicle for a number of anxieties, not the least of which is the importance of maintaining a firm body as proof of one's ability to control his or her desires (1993, p. 67). This association explores the perceived relationships between social ambition and body image in cultural expressions. The logic argues that if an individual was to desire to improve his or her economic lot they would surely be able to exercise restraint when it came to their most basic desires, most notably for food (1993, p. 195).

Although much of Bordo's earlier work explains this social disciplining of the female body, the coverage of Aspin offers testimony of the potential application of this denial of agency across gendered lines. Leslie (Les) Aspin, as he is introduced in his

DOD biography, appeared much as though he were a socially insecure teenager, trying to curry favor with popular students, but doomed because of his physical appearance. *Newsweek*'s John Barry argued that Aspin "knew, in Washington, success is based on appearances, and that his image was all wrong" and in an effort to rehabilitate himself in the wake of the Somalia operation, he "bought new suits and hit the talk show circuit" (December 27, 1993). Bruce Van Voorst, a correspondent for *Time* noted a similar phenomenon, "He made a very rigorous trip to Europe, came back, looked fit" (MacNeil & Warner, December 15, 1993).

Aspin's wardrobe problems were items of public consumption before Somalia. In a *Washington Post* feature on the newly nominated Secretary of Defense, Bob Woodward noted, "His shirt collar does not often fit" and colleagues in the House had to remind him not to pick his nose during public hearings (February 21, 1993). After Somalia, Aspin's wardrobe became fused with his problems as a leader; the "legendarily rumpled suits" metaphorically expressed the poor fit of the Secretary of Defense (Apple, June 14, 1995). Other news agencies openly united attire and leadership including a *Newsweek* story on Somalia complete with a picture captioned "his rumpled leadership" (Barry) and former Ambassador Burt's explained that Aspin "was not a buttoned up, disciplined guy" (MacNeil & Lehrer, December 17, 1993). The volume of public discussion of Aspin's attire led Jeff Greenfield to dedicate an entire column to rebuke its importance, commenting

> What bothered me most was all the talk that Aspin didn't fit the military demeanor; that his suits were rumpled and his posture poor, that he looked, in the words of one critic, like an "unmade bed" (December 21, 1993).

Bordo's research allows a powerful synthesis of Aspin's 'discipline' problems. He couldn't manage his own attire so it shouldn't be surprising that he couldn't control a large bureaucracy. He tried to repair his physical image after Somalia, but by then it was too late. His clothes may have stood in for his problems, but new clothes could not remake his masculinity.

The inability control himself physically was only one dimension of Aspin's body image. Bordo's later work turns to the male body and describes the "cult of hardness" where the physical capabilities that a man exerts determines his abilities to be seen as "manly," and capable of leading others (1999, p. 55). Aspin has long dealt with questions of his 'strength' in masculine terms, such as shortly after his nomination when a senior officer asked in a *Washington Post*, "Is he tough enough, and can he lead?" (Woodward, February 21, 1993). These concerns appeared consistent with such labels as a "very sensitive guy" (MacNeil & Warner, December 15, 1993). The DOD's biography acknowledged that he "appeared weak in response to detailed probing and criticism of his performance" before Congress in the early days of October, a major offense to codes of masculinity. *USA Today* also noted that the crises had "exposed as weak" Aspin's influence within the administration (Komarow, October 20, 1993).

These types of accounts were highlighted by his physical weaknesses, especially his heart related ailments. *Cox News Service* described Aspin's health problems in their

report of his resignation and synthesized them with his political problems: "his tenure began with a bout of heart trouble and continued through a divisive debate over gays in the military and controversial policy decisions on Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia" (December 16, 1993). Colin Powell similarly joins Aspin's voracious appetite with his health problems after describing Aspin's ability to finish thirteen hors d'oueuvres while meeting with King Hussein of Jordan. Powell concludes this anecdote with the reminder that "Aspin's health posed a problem" (p. 579). Even after his passing, Aspin seemed to be linked to Clinton and the club of soft bodies. In his eulogy, Clinton noted their similarities as "policy wonks" with "spreading waistlines" (Apple, June 14, 1995). The popular representation of Aspin as undisciplined, as soft, as fundamentally feminine, ostracized him from the hard body culture of the military. Aspin's obituaries often describe his policy and health weaknesses together, suggesting that his flawed masculinity drove him from the Pentagon and abruptly ended his life.

Even if Aspin represented an undisciplined outsider, someone who failed to share important values with the men and women he directed, it alone may not provide evidence of a profound schism in civil-military relations. It would appear unlikely that Aspin was the first unpopular Secretary of Defense; in fact, it is his association with one of his most controversial predecessors that the Kohn's final barometer of problems can be explored.

Kohn's third element, the active and often public resistance of military officials, is informed by a belief that military officials choose a different path not because of their loss of faith in the American system, but precisely because of their strong conviction that

civilian leaders pose a threat to the nation. This heroic disobedience must be taken to prevent incompetent authorities from placing America's soldiers at risk and by squandering the credibility of the United States' resolve, much as Oliver North had to find a way to continue supplying the 'freedom fighters' in Nicaragua.

Two complementary strains of this position are found in the coverage of Aspin. One argument contended that Aspin lacked the moral authority to make decisions about the deployment of troops and equipment. The second constructed a disciplined antithesis to Aspin's soft leadership. This dichotomy employed a depiction of a near-perfect senior military officer, whose experience and insight qualified them to direct the armed forces. The narrative structure of both arguments is deeply influenced by interpretations of historical 'lessons' from the Vietnam War. This argument about the true location of authority mirrors the historical concerns about the active civilian leadership of Secretary Robert McNamara and the perceived deferential actions of senior military officers. Stephen Vlastos explains a common theme in revisionist histories of the Vietnam War, "to win the next one, send packing the unmanly Washington bureaucrats and politicians who chose the path of gradual escalation; put real men in charge who will go in big, hard and fast" (1991, p. 69).

Aspin frequently appeared as both an 'unmanly' bureaucrat and a politician looking to appease political forces instead of defeating military enemies. Aspin's calculation of the political implications of deploying armor worried a number of critics. When Senator D'Amato called for Aspin's resignation he noted that he "let us down by

turning a military decision into a political decision" (Bloomberg News, December 14, 1993), a charge echoed by Rep. Archer, "Aspin is guilty of inexcusable negligence … [he] put political motivations above the safety of American troops" (Clayton, October 29, 1993).

Other critics claimed that uniformed personnel should have made this type of decision because they would never have allowed such a calculation. On CNN's *Late Edition,* Aspin's predecessor, Dick Cheney, argued that it was wrong for Pentagon civilians "sitting in Washington" to decide the appropriate level of safety for American troops (Gertz, October 11, 1993). Senator McCain demanded to "find out how many lives were lost because of the refusal of the civilian leadership in the Pentagon to listen to the military leadership" (Shaw, October 8, 1993) and Hackworth quoted a lieutenant colonel who asked "Who is he to deny a commander in the field a company of armor while sitting on his royal throne?" (Hackworth, October 18, 1993).

This style of civilian leadership was frequently described as precisely the same that led to the problems in Vietnam. Aspin was, after all, a "Defense Department whiz kid" under Secretary McNamara (*Washington Post*, May 23, 1995). House Republican Whip Newt Gingrich described the armor decision as, "micromanagement" that "has to chill all of us" (Shaw, October 8, 1993) and Hackworth noted,

> Mixing politics and war fighting doesn't make sense. Neither does the idea of civilians running a war from afar. These were vital lessons we learned the hard way in Vietnam (October 18, 1993).

For Cheney, the decision was simple "There's no reason not give him [the field commander] what he asked for unless he's making a stupid request" (Borger, October 25, 1993). These arguments echo Powell's rationale for supporting the decision, because "as a general principle I believe in supporting the commander in the field" (Gertz, October 3, 1995). The recognition that Aspin fails to possess the core elements of military loyalty legitimates those military officers who understand the importance of the chain of command. Through this division between Aspin and uniformed officers, like Colin Powell, the tensions over civilian authority are even more noticeable.

The divergence between Powell and Aspin appears as one of the most interesting elements of media coverage, both at the level of their role in the armor decision and the representations of their masculinity. *The Times of London* provided this interesting cross-cultural summary of the decision-making process, "The request was relayed to Mr. Aspin by Colin Powell, a national hero, whose judgment is widely respected. General Powell … tried to convince Mr. Aspin that more armour was needed, but to no avail" (Brodie & Fletcher, October 8, 1993). As Powell noted in subsequent media accounts, he was attempting to support the regional commander, even if he did not strongly agree with the need for additional support. Powell's account amplifies the divisions between how civilian authorities and uniformed personnel make decisions. Consider his summary of the same decision in his autobiography,

> I had done what I had to, a soldier backing soldiers. Aspin had done what a civilian policymaker has to do, try to meet the larger objective, in this case, to get us out of Somalia, not further into it (p. 586).

Even as Powell provides a framework that explains Aspin's actions, it builds upon the noble grunt theory that civilian authorities are not concerned with backing other soldiers, only meeting those larger objectives, which if one were to extend Powell's logic, would position Aspin as ultimately achieving that objective in a morally reprehensible fashion.

The assaults on Aspin's ability to make decisions as the Secretary of Defense stand in stark contrast to the traits bestowed on Powell. Powell supported the decision to reinforce the troops and his departure only days before the fateful raid appeared to have left the young Clinton administration without a necessary voice of experience. Powell's claim that he pressed for a policy review a week before the operation becomes far more prominent in coverage than his lack of memory regarding his decision not to support a separate request for AC-130 Spectre gunships. When the missing gunships that, according to *Newsweek*, "might well have turned the course of the battle" (Post, October 18, 1993) because of their ability to frighten the Somalis, are described, it is frequently as part of a decision by "the Pentagon," a nameless bureaucracy that likely refers more to its chief authority, the Secretary of Defense, than the retiring Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Significantly in the comparative representations, inexperience is treated as very differently. Aspin's lack of military service appears prominently as a barrier to his ability to manage the Pentagon. Powell's lack of political experience, however, only appeared to make him more desirable as a politician. Even as media attention swirled around a possible Powell for President campaign in 1996, Powell appeared largely beyond

criticism: “Colin Powell has been mostly immune to the kind of bashing the media give other wannabe statesmen” (Cummings & Rudinicki, p. 7). When Aspin attempted to blame Powell for not paying closer attention to the Somalia mission, arguing that the retiring General was more concerned with retirement events than his duties, CNN’s Robert Novak reported that Aspin’s failure to act as a “team player” only sped his departure from the administration (Novak, December 17, 1993).

Powell differs from Aspin in matters beyond debates over specific requests. With much of the media coverage suggesting, if not explicitly arguing, that civilians should not make these types of decisions, the binary between the feminized, discipline-less Aspin and the firm, controlled Powell becomes more significant. If Aspin embodies the problems of civilian society, then Powell represents the strength of the military as institution. Powell as a cultural hero ‘makes sense’ because of the heroic traits of the military, as a Powell biography notes

> And, after all, what better place for a hero to distinguish himself than in the military, an institution that still places a high premium on values like loyalty, discipline, and command structures in a world that has otherwise all but abandoned such traditions (Cummings & Rudinicki, p. 5).

Powell stands in for the values of loyalty and discipline and furthers the chasm between understandings of civilian and military character.

If the logic of civilian supremacy is predicated on the importance of the more democratic character of civilian society, then the representation of Powell as hero poses a major challenge. The widely accepted narrative of Powell as self-made man, who rose

from obscurity in New York City to become a national hero further reinforces the notion that the military is a more egalitarian social organization. Consider Michael Eric Dyson's discussion of Powell's cultural importance

> His personal immigrant's tale highlights and reinforces the defining features of American identity … He conquered racism as a military hero … For many whites, Powell is how the American dream looks like when it wears black. For them, his strong endorsement of American citizenship neutralizes the strong suspicions blacks possess of unqualified loyalty to our country. Powell's heroism is rooted in military service and the moral discipline that we like to believe comes with the territory … If Powell loomed as a potential political savior, it is large part because he appeared to bleach out the dangerous elements of black masculinity in the curing pool of patriotism" (1997, p. 158).

Powell racial heritage enhances the progressive appeal of the military and, by comparison, weakens the civilian sector's authority to insist on social reform within the military. Not only can the military more effectively manage its own operations, but civilian society is in no position to demand changes in military culture. If the military can transcend social problems like racial discrimination, then under what authority can Aspin insist on removing gendered restrictions?

This reading of Powell's importance as a cultural icon suggests that a particular representation of race, like gender, can serve as a powerful rhetorical device. Powell's presence as a loyal black officer simultaneously ignores and highlights his racial identity. Because he is black, but without any of the prominent negative stereotypes of black masculinity, Powell functions to disable arguments for affirmative action or special treatment in both a civilian and military context. If he could overcome poverty and rise to

the highest echelon of the Armed Forces, then others who fail in that same path must lack some of his essentially military qualities of discipline and loyalty.

The power of Powell as a repudiation to conceptions of liberalism is apparent in the contrast to Aspin. Aspin represents the decay of civilian society, unable to manage itself, let alone others. Powell's neatly groomed appearance and decisive leadership provides a symbol of black masculinity that dwarfs Aspin's disheveled clothes and penchant for endless conversation. This representation is firmly fixed on the now late Secretary of Defense. Aspin's early demise and Powell's continued ascendance provide two important cultural figures, figures that the events of October 1993 brought in sharp contrast. If Kohn's critics are correct, and the periodic problems of civilian authority will be remedied, then some accounting must be made of these prominent representations. If the civilian authority is deemed as corrupted by the excesses of liberal society and the military appears as the only reservoir of cultural values and military knowledge, then how controversial is Kohn's contention that civilian control over the military is currently threatened?

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the representation of noble grunts and incompetent bureaucrats has gone beyond a familiar device in Vietnam era films and toward a dominant interpretation of how American military force should be employed. Critics who defend the current health of civilian control have attempted to dismiss

concerns on the grounds that the Clinton administration, especially in its early years, represented a historical anomaly. They argue that the unique juxtaposition of a young Democratic administration with more experienced military leaders provided only a momentary changing of the generational guard. This chapter has argued that this interpretation may be troubled not only because cultural authority would still need to be restored to civilian control, but also that the public would have some desire to see this transfer take place.

The development of responsibility for the Battle of Mogadishu, as the extension of the trope of the noble grunt, offers support for the premise that the military is now presented in mainstream media outlets as the truly legitimate authority for military decisions. Skepticism of this position explains that the cultural legitimacy bestowed on the military will revert back to civilian hands precisely because the personalities that dominated the Clinton administration are now themselves history. Many of the liberal figures have passed from national stage, and often in ways that reinforced the criticism of their status as prominent liberals. Aspin's undisciplined lifestyle finally culminated in the collapse of his weakened heart. Clinton's personal scandals and infamous departure from office hardly provided opportunities for a reconciliation with military culture. The man who would be his successor lost perhaps the most contested election in American history and in the process considered the dismissal of thousands of absentee ballots from overseas military personnel because of missing postmarks and other irregularities. Bush campaign spokesperson and later Press Secretary Ari Fleischer did nothing to diminish

any antipathy by claiming that Gore efforts to investigate military ballots "inflicted damage on America's military men and women" (Montgomery, November 21, 2000). Kohn's prediction that the former Army newsman's presidency might have been just as troubled with military figures appears entirely conceivable.

The permanence of the noble grunt and incompetent bureaucrat dichotomy appears likely to continue. As the media coverage becomes a smaller part of the popular remembrance of Somalia, later drafts of historical clarify its importance. Sony's cinematic version of *Black Hawk Down*, rushed to theaters in the wake of September 11th, devotes almost all of its concluding black legend text to those American soldiers killed in the operation. The lone overt statement of culpability for the raid is that "Major General F. Garrison accepted full responsibility for the outcome of the raid" (Nolan, p. 129). In this big-screen account of heroism, the graphic depiction of American bravery is contrasted to the near total absence of civilian leadership. Garrison accepts responsibility, as any honorable commanding officer would, even though the audience is asked to consider that acceptance alongside Garrison's initial briefing of the American troops. Garrison, played by Sam Sheppard, explains the mission's basic components and notes, "I had requested light armor and AC-130 Spectre gunships, but Washington, in all its wisdom, decided against this. Too high profile" (Nolan, p. 22).

Garrison, who the audience is reminded retired one day after Aidid's death, becomes one of those heroic grunts, despite his rank, because they were forced to operate within the bizarre constraints set out by civilian authorities. The film's perceived lack of

direct commentary about the Clinton administration should be instead viewed as the standard invisibility of civilian authority. Clinton is only mentioned briefly in the concluding text for his decision to withdraw the Delta Force and Rangers and Aspin's name is never mentioned. Their role in the binary is still present, as for example, when Lieutenant Colonel Danny McKnight, played by Tom Sizemore in an eerily similar role to Sergeant Horvath in *Saving Private Ryan*, expressed a full list of concerns of the mission and asks with a mixture of bravado and sarcasm, "what's not to like?" (Nolan, p. 23).

At a moment when the United States is engaged in a far-reaching campaign against terrorism, *Black Hawk Down* grossed over $100 million in domestic markets (Cadorette). The popular and uncritical acceptance of the film leads us to answer McKnight's question with a healthy concern about the future of civilian control over the military. There is plenty not to like because as long as the grunt occupies a position of cultural prominence it inherently diminishes the authority of civilian rule. To accept these narratives of heroism as nonpolitical is to declare that questions of the propriety of civilian control irrelevant. Consider the missing elements of the call to embrace of the subtitle, 'Leave No Man Behind.' It is clear that the noble soldier both fights and is willing to return for their comrades, but who could ever counsel them to take such action? The representation of civilian authority as dangerous to the military, perhaps even as the off camera voice encouraging them to cowardly think only of themselves, remains deeply entrenched in popular narratives. This review of popular discourse surrounding the Battle

of Mogadishu suggests not only that Kohn's thesis of weakening civilian control may be dangerously prescient, but more importantly, we may be left without a vocabulary to engage this subject.

As now Secretary of State Colin Powell continues as a high profile public figure with almost no negative associations from Somalia, we may wonder whether the accreditation of Garrison *accepting* responsibility for the outcome of the raid is much more than an extension of Rambo's inquiry if "we get to win this time," Regan's 1980 campaign rhetoric, and the larger betrayal theory. In this entire line of argument, unnamed, but clearly demonized civilian authorities remain the primary obstacles to the success of America's armed forces.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: MILITARY REPRESENTATIONS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11TH

Introduction

This project has examined three prominent case studies of American military operations in the 1990s in order to provide a greater understanding of how these media events constitute representations of American political identity. Central to this analysis was the unique window provided by the perceived safety of this historical period; American foreign policy could engage in rhetorical experiments because the United States ultimately lacked a mortal enemy. The luxury of determining a foreign policy primarily, or entirely, by interest ended on September 11, 2001.

This chapter summarizes the major strategies from each case study before considering how these strategies function in the War on Terrorism. This section then examines the developing symbiosis of media and governmental interests and how it produces popular representations of the new war. Next, the section explores the dominance of a unified national identity in media coverage and official discourse. Finally, the individual lessons from each case study are re-examined in light of the War on Terrorism in order to consider the trajectory of the rhetorical dimensions of American foreign policy in the 21st century.

The 'Lessons' of the 1990s

Each case study examines a different question that must be answered in war discourse: why do we intervene, why do we continue to support an operation and how can we end a mission. The answer must function effectively in relation to the narrative of that operation. In this discussion, these strategies become understood as powerful devices to portray the unification of a domestic populace; these become rationales that can allow an incredibly diverse nation to be transformed into an imagined community.

Perhaps no strategy more effectively weaves together diverse strands of nationhood than gendered appeals. Despite the extensive research done explaining the importance of savagery as an appeal to military force, little work has been done examining how these calls are nuanced to more closely approximate the community they represent. This project's discussion of the media reports of rape camps in Kosovo provides one such opportunity to revisit how savagery can be redefined to maintain its salience. This work complicates the notion that the power of the rationale to intervene was a gender-neutral humanitarian appeal.

Gendered visibility, instead, becomes a useful lens of criticism. By exploring how gendered violence is constructed and amplified, critics can appreciate that these calls require a distinction from 'domestic' interpretations of violence, even as they draw support from it. Emphasizing the comparison of violence in Europe today with Europe of sixty years ago does little to enhance the visibility of gendered violence if the premise behind all of the violence is the representation of a uniquely evil other; an evil

tautologically defined by its willingness to seek out women and children as 'weaker' victims. It is this willingness to transfer abroad this country's most subhuman stereotypes of racial groups that explains how these serial rapists can provide such a threat that would require military action.

A lesson from Kosovo then is that visibility is, by itself, an insufficient goal for advocates working to reduce gendered violence. The benefits of visibility originate from the greater appreciation that can be garnered from public attention. This agentless interpretation ignores recent history that suggests that these appeals are quite popular, but their popularity can be shifted to support an 'us vs. them' perspective without any reference to the original cause. A campaign to end gendered violence must include a more critical review of international appeals.

Not all strategies need to be considered from the perspective of justifying an initial operation. The prominence of peacekeeping operations and long standing conflicts presents plenty of circumstances where the primary rhetorical challenge is maintaining, rather than developing, support. Three American presidents have publicly stated their desire to see Saddam Hussein removed, but he instead has emerged as this generation's Fidel Castro, defiantly resisting the American superpower. Throughout the 1990s, dominant media narrative surrounding Iraqi policy utilized a configurational discourse; each American air strike is described as part a concerted effort to degrade Hussein's weapons programs. When the urgency of the crisis escalated, however, this

nonchronological interpretation was called into conflict with an episodic account that attempted to distinguish between each of the many crises by asking 'what comes next?'

The Gulf War has received tremendous attention from popular and academic critics. The awkward elements of its conclusion are, for the most part, treated as a primary contributor to the electoral failure to George Bush. It is a testament to the Clinton administration that it could engage an enemy for eight years under a generally unchanging narrative, but also an indictment of media coverage that became dependent on the administration's own interpretations of success. An important lesson drawn from this case study is that the administration had much more success the less it attempted to explain itself; the higher the visibility of its discourse the more that chronology interfered with spatial assessments. The ability to control interpretations of temporality provides more explanatory power for total television.

The final case study revisits the American operation to Somalia, but attempts to move beyond the major units of analysis that have occupied so many critics. If public discourse can rehabilitate its appeals after a defeat, and the history of the Vietnam War definitely supports this assessment, then it must revisit the causes of those defeats. Instead of attributing the problem to some form of historical amnesia, this chapter looks to the most popular representations surrounding defeat, those left standing, to find how loss can be commodified.

The heroic soldier is perhaps the most valorized and least critiqued expression in contemporary war discourse. Heroism is understood as a universal value and those who

embody it are the subjects of national acclaim. The move to welcome home Vietnam Veterans in the wake of the Gulf War reflects the salience that properly honoring heroism now possess. Representing heroes requires the presence of a foil; someone who stands in their way. This missing villain, a crucial portion of the noble grunt theory is powerfully on display in the public controversy over responsibility for the raid in Mogadishu.

The public vilification of Les Aspin cannot be viewed simply as the construction of an administration scapegoat for an unpopular policy. The manner in which his authority to make personnel and supply decisions was questioned offers a deeply held disregard for the legitimacy of civilian authority. This authority is viewed as corrupted by an ill-formed masculinity that deemed discipline unnecessary. The contrast between the feminized Aspin and the uniquely appeal of Colin Powell's masculinity offers a great deal of explanation for the cultural authority that the military now possesses. Having already laid the defeat in Vietnam at the poorly attired feet of civilians like Les Aspin, Somalia becomes another articulation of why the military must control itself. As long as heroism substitutes for questions of authority in these media events, the doctrine of civilian control must be considered deeply threatened.

These lessons are now part of the cultural fabric that has wrestled with interpretations of Vietnam and the Gulf War. How these strategies are deployed in the War on Terrorism is the subject of the next section.

The New Total Television

No single event dominated television coverage like the terrorist attacks of September 11th, with the big four networks suspending all regular programming for at least the first 90 hours of the crisis, surpassing the continual coverage of the assassination of President Kennedy and the beginning of Operation Desert Storm (Glass, p. 4). The attack on American soil was felt throughout all forms of mediated communication as television, newspapers and Internet news outlets experienced a surge in viewership (Glass, p. 3). Media saturation, complete with the repetition of footage showing the collapse of the Twin Towers, produced a media event accessible across the nation and the world. In the words of critic Tom Shales, "we had virtually been there to witness it" (Shales, December 20, 2001). The magnitude of the event, an unprecedented surprise attack on the mainland United States, challenged expectations of what normal routines were and if and when Americans could return to them.

The shock and the horror of the attack were soon joined by coverage of Americans coping with the tragedy; this coping process appeared to require that stories and plot lines be revisited so that the nation could grieve. This grief, however, did not involve a long-term cessation of the routines of media coverage. President Bush urged the nation to get back to business and media outlets with sensitivity to the national mood. Television networks shuffled their schedules to promote additional news coverage and programs that might provide emotional relief to a grieving nation.

Beyond a brief effort to minimize violence on daily programming, the most dramatic change made by television networks was an effort to incorporate the impending American military response into their programming. Cable news stations restructured their news programming to allow for a maximum of coverage by their highest profile correspondents; for example, CNN utilized *Wolf Blizter Reports* and *NewsNight with Aaron Brown*, MSNBC countered with war coverage on *Ashleigh Banfield's A Region In Conflict*, and Fox emphasized war coverage on *News Special Report with Britt Hume*, *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren* and the gun-toting Geraldo Rivera's *War Zone*. The major non-cable networks retooled their own news formats and found some of their programming uniquely relevant, such as CBS's *JAG* and their weekly drama about the CIA, *The Agency*. Networks also fostered reality based shows that would emphasize American soldiers as the primary characters. ABC, CBS, USA Networks and VH1 are all developing new programs that feature American soldiers, in some cases those stationed in Afghanistan (Jensen).

The attacks also forced a reexamination of several soon to be released major films. Some films deemed too close to real life events, including Arnold Schwarzenegger's *Collateral Damage*, where his firefighter character fights against the terrorists that blew up his family, and *Bad Company*, where Anthony Hopkins and Chris Rock star as CIA operatives fighting terrorists wielding nuclear weapons in New York City, were delayed until a more appropriate time. Others were edited, such as the trailer for Spider-Man, so that the image of a giant spider web capturing a helicopter between

the Twin Towers would be removed. Not all war films were deemed less appropriate. Sensing the resurgent appeal of American heroism, productions that valorized the American military, including *Black Hawk Down* and *Behind Enemy Lines*, were rushed to theaters (Associated Press, February 2, 2002).

This project has already embraced Tom Englehart's concept of total television, where media and governmental interests merge during prominent spectacles, and the War on Terrorism has only enhanced the importance of this perspective. Television and film productions that discuss American foreign policy should be considered as part of a larger body of work that includes national news coverage, especially when war reporting no longer includes reporting from the war. Despite the extensive media attention, across the wide spectrum of cable news networks, viewers may notice a significant lack of front-line combat reporting; many of 'local' reports are filed from Pakistan or other regional locations. Neil Hickey, the editor at large of *The Columbia Journalism Review*, argues that the Afghanistan campaign includes the most dramatic restrictions on media access to American troops in the field, citing a November comment from the Washington Bureau Chief for *The Associated Press*, "we have practically zero access to American forces in the theater" (Hickey, 2002).

All prior agreements designed to resolve controversies over the media's access to combat were ignored as the Defense Department issued its rules on media access (Easton, March 2002). Faced with the option of traveling by themselves and risking the fate of eight murdered journalists or operate within the Pentagon's constraints, most reporters

have provided coverage that supplements the official explanation of events. During the fall, most of the information provided to the public came from the Pentagon itself through the briefings of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and other senior officials (Easton, March 2002). Even as CNN and other news networks jockey for greater star power, described by one columnist as "the process of installing its own anchors as heavenly constellations capable of outshining events they cover," (Rosenberg, December 14, 2001) the Pentagon unleashed its own star, Secretary Rumsfeld.

Rumsfeld utilized the regular press briefings of the Pentagon press corps as a televised opportunity to present the administration's position, when secrecy would allow it. For a cabinet official who seemed out of step in the administration's early days, his transformation into a popular wartime secretary was nothing short of remarkable. *US News and World Report* explained, "He became the Pentagon's answer to Harry Truman, a straight-talking Midwesterner – via Princeton – who relished telling the public that, yes, it is our mission to kill the enemy in Afghanistan" (Mazetti, December 17, 2001). Stephen Hess of the Brookings Institute argued that Rumsfeld's success is related to his tendency to avoid over-hyping specific events and he provides "A very important filter" through which the American people could understand the war effort (Brookings/Harvard, February 27, 2002). The Washington Bureau Chief for the Hearst newspapers explained that Rumsfeld's importance is not in providing information, "but in giving us a chance to see the song and dance in public" (Hickey, 2002).

Beyond the ceremonial element of Rumsfeld's briefings, his aggressive efforts to control their tenor have produced a more hesitant press corps. Rumsfeld's penchant for limiting the release of information and chastising those with incorrect details has produced a press corps less willing to ask challenging questions. According to a Senior Defense Policy analyst at the CATO Institute, "There are a lot of softball questions in those press conferences" (Easton, March 2002). Without onsite reporters and without a forum for challenging the administration's briefings, the tone of major news coverage now appears unusually similar to the administration's official explanations.

These changes should be closely scrutinized because they help to comprise a central source of information about the war. Not only does recent polling data support the contention that cable news has received the largest audience shares in the wake of the terrorist attacks (Kohut, 2002), but a fundamental shift has occurred in the basic roles of media and military organizations. *National Public Radio's* Robert Siegel contends restrictions have altered the way official information interacts with media coverage because "The Pentagon is providing the first draft" and journalists are left to follow that with the limited means available to them (Brookings/Harvard, February 27, 2002). Describing television coverage as this first draft of history may seem more appropriate to programming like CBS's documentary of never before seen footage taken inside the towers, but it also applies to the *JAG* episode "The Tribunal."

The Bush administration's plans to employ military tribunals as a forum for prosecuting al Qaeda suspects created perhaps the greatest domestic controversy of any

element of the War on Terrorism. Even as the administration refined the procedures that would govern tribunals, producers of CBS's dramatization of the Navy's Judge Advocate Corps developed an episode that portrays the tribunal of a terrorist suspect. The suddenly popular show offered viewers perhaps their only opportunity to 'witness' a tribunal and consider if a tribunal could provide a fair trial for defendants because actual tribunals will be closed to television coverage[22]. Describing the implications of this hybrid of future news and popular television programming, Robert Lichter, President of the Center for Media and Public Affairs concedes, "News and entertainment have merged already. The question is now whose version gets to the public first" (Seelye, March 21, 2002).

As the military increasingly gets its version to the public first, sometimes in the form of entertainment and sometimes in the form of news coverage, critics should be increasingly skeptical of the ability of entertainment or news organizations to act in ways contrary to national policy. As anecdotal information accumulates about the complementary role that media organizations have played, such as the dissemination of a memo from CNN to its employees, instructing them to frame any reports of Taliban casualties in relation to the deaths of thousands of Americans, critics must look closer at the prominent themes of media coverage. (Brookings/Harvard, February 27, 2002).

Future war coverage shows no signs of changing this dynamic. As the partially overt military campaign in Afghanistan winds down and is replaced by covert operations across the globe, press access will decline even further, especially as some of the United States' new partners are not inclined to publicize their acceptance of American military

forces (Easton, March 2002). This dynamic will also extend to entertainment productions. The Pentagon, for example, retains the ability to review material for the new wave of military inspired reality programs, even as the executives take great effort to explain why this does constitute propaganda or censorship. Producer R.J. Cutler, of the VH1 program "The Military Diaries Project," argues that the military is "not at all interested in editing the stories we're telling" (Jensen) and differentiates these efforts from the traditional model of adversarial media-military relations.

In a similar vein, Jack Valenti, the president and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America, and a former veteran of Lyndon Johnson's effort to sell the Vietnam War to the American public, has taken on a leadership role in the campaign to utilize Hollywood filmmaking as a tool of American public diplomacy. Valenti describes the importance of this effort, "We learned from Vietnam that it is a mistake to try to fight a war unless all the people are rallied behind you … So the efforts of Hollywood will be to shore up that will" (New Perspectives Quarterly, Spring 2002).

Attempting to distinguish these voluntary partnerships between entertainment executives and the military from propaganda or censorship ignores the important shift in the relationship between media and military organizations. Even as media critics glamorize the conflict between media and military, such as "The two cultures are essentially irreconcilable, each with a valid agenda" and the "good-faith tension between these two sets of aspirations serves the public best" (Hickey, 2002), these critiques ignore the fact that, to a large degree, the organizations are no longer working on two distinct

agendas. The fundamental nature of total television requires that the military have no interest in scripting the stories of American troops as they heroically represent the United States or demanding that Hollywood produce certain films. The importance of total television is found in the way it complements the media's need for high-production value information in the wake of front-line combat restrictions. David Elliot, the leading actor on JAG summarized the importance the media's reliance on military cooperation when explaining why, even though the military has no formal authority to revise JAG plots, they attempt to avoid angering their Pentagon contacts, "because they lend a great deal of production value that we couldn't buy" (Seelye, March 31, 2002). This next section explores how total television helps to represent the unification of America.

The New Patriotism

In the first few months of the War on Terrorism, the Bush administration laid out a clear rhetorical framework of good and evil to guide future operations. Military action would take clear precedence over negotiated settlements. There would be no ambiguity in the prosecution of terrorists anywhere in the world; nations must choose to be with or against the United States. Bush unified the troika of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as the "Axis of Evil" who "threaten the peace of the world" (January 30, 2002). Merging al Qaeda with these evil nations unified America's enemies, mirroring a perceived unification of America's domestic populace. This project has explored how, during the brief windows of military operations, media coverage spoke of the national 'we' engaged

in combat, but after September 11th the brief references to a unified populace were replaced by a torrent of references to the phenomenon of 'new patriotism.' In a widely cited editorial in *The New York Times*, writer George Packer articulated how the attacks transformed American political culture,

> Sept. 11 made it safe for liberals to be patriots. Among the things destroyed with the twin towers was the notion, held by certain Americans ever since Vietnam, that to be stirred by national identity, carry a flag and feel grateful toward someone in uniform ought to be a source of embarrassment. The force of the blows woke us up to the fact that we are part of a national community (September 30, 2001).

Rich Heffren of *The National Catholic Reporter* echoed the impact of attacks on American political culture, "The strokes that felled the towers probably also ended the ages of cynicism … Now patriotism is solidly lodged in American hearts across the political spectrum" October 12, 2001).

Both of these accounts situate the moral clarity of American victimhood as a powerful enough force to dislodge the political divisions created by Vietnam and decades worth of political scandals. This unification seemed consistent with Bush's call of September 12th, "They were acts of war. This will require our country to unite in steadfast determination and resolve" (Bush, G., 2001). Scholars from across the academy offered explanations for the seeming unification of national resolve. Robert Siegel argued, for example, that the combination of attacks provided a more thorough sense of vulnerability and unity for the American public, because no single location or no single element of

American society was targeted (Brookings/Harvard, February 27, 2002). The Pew Research Center described the magnitude of the attacks

> The events of September 11 have affected public opinion more dramatically than any event since World War II. Clearly the attacks brought unparalleled national unity, and patriotism, but perhaps more importantly and more enduringly, they have once again elevated the importance of nationhood. Washington, the federal government and even its political leadership have new relevance post-9/11 (2002).

Media reports explored how the idea of nationhood was articulated in the fall of 2001, specifically emphasizing the close of traditional fault lines in American society. The sudden resurgence of patriotism among the generation that protested Vietnam and their children, the unmotivated Generation X'ers, was a popular subject of analysis. *Newsweek*, for example, described the powerful transformation of attitudes among college age Americans, including massive support for Bush, as sufficient cause to replace the slacker Generation X label with the new moniker "Generation 9-11" (Kantrowitz & Naughton, November 12, 2001). *The Boston Globe's* Kimberly Blanton similarly explained the surge of Americanness, noting, "nowhere is the sentiment more striking than among college students and their Vietnam-era parents" (Blanton, November 18, 2001). The willingness to self-identify as an American was hardly limited to these groups; the surge in personal displays of Americanness, perhaps best expressed by the proliferation of flags and flag imagery, provided individuals an opportunity to present themselves as members of a unified community.

Other critics noted the powerful synergy between the call to support America and buy American. Patriotic items sold as fund-raisers for relief causes and the impending Holiday season helped to provide a renaissance for manufacturers of iconic expressions of Americanness, described by the East Coast fashion director at Nordstrom "Patriotism is a customer need right now" (Bratskeir, November 29, 2001) and summarized by Tom Shales, "The new patriotism itself became an industry" (December 30, 2001). Unlike the fleeting expressions of yellow ribbons at the beginning of the Gulf War, now cars, homes and persons were decorated, perhaps indefinitely, with icons of Americanness.

This project hardly presumes to offer a definitive reading of the depth of this expression, but anecdotal experiences of unity were magnified by media coverage that offered evidence from the across the nation. NPR's Siegel contended, "the near uniformity that we have reported in this has been the near uniformity of the country" (Brookings/Harvard, February 27, 2002). Although this perception of unanimity may fade, it is important to appreciate the Pew Research Center's conclusion that the fundamental difference may not be that the public appears to like the government more as much as they need the government more, a motive that lends itself to continued support for the new war (2002). In an era where the lines between news and entertainment are increasingly blurred, the representation of a national community appears all the more valuable for a government preparing for a long campaign.

The concern about managing public support in this indefinite action has already begun to concern national policymakers. Dr. Leonard Wong, in a recent publication from the Strategic Studies Institute, argues that,

> Americans are bound to be fickle … This war will not be like World War II … Americans are being told to return to their normal lives … As they return to those lives, their support of military action will diminish unless the military continually shows progress in the war on terrorism (2002, p. 69).

To date, keeping the American public supportive of military operations has not provided much of a challenge, but Wong's view appears supported by several governmental efforts to maintain the current level of support. The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Charlotte Beers, for example, has developed a strategy of "total communication" described by her senior aide as emphasizing essential themes including an effort to "represent the basic American values this country" (Brookings/Harvard, January 16, 2002).

Although this program has failed to generate much controversy, a similar effort from the Defense Department created its own bad publicity for the administration. In February, the Defense Department revealed the creation of a new Office of Strategic Influence, an office responsible for information operations and warfare designed to influence opposition forces (CNN, February 19, 2002). A very public controversy ensued because of the proposal to plant disinformation in foreign media outlets. Although American law prohibits the Pentagon from directly providing such information to the

domestic media, the reliance on international news agencies for local sources would allow the information to be filtered back into American markets (Carver, February 20, 2002).

Secretary Rumsfeld ended the controversy by announcing the closure of the office because it "was so damaged that it's pretty clear to me that it could not function effectively" (Gilmore, February 26, 2002). With both of these new operations, the federal government has developed programs specifically designed to maintain a high level of public support and displayed a potential willingness to offer disinformation as part of the effort. The media watchdog organization Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting wondered if OSI's closure ultimately did more to reinforce the Pentagon's appearance in working with the media than it did to prevent future disinformation campaigns (Solomon, February 28, 2002). In this context, critics should closely examine the themes and argumentative strategies made in favor of Operation Enduring Freedom, especially as they may resemble advanced versions of the rhetorical experiments of the 1990s.

Lessons From the 1990s

As media coverage moved from the September attacks to the initial response in Afghanistan and now toward future operations, a tendency developed to argue that each media event functions independently, setting its own parameters as information becomes available. Indeed, semiotics scholar Marshall Blonsky argues that we are experiencing a constant process of writing and re-writing of the news of the war, contending that our

culture of speed and consumption wipes away each product or celebrity as a new icon takes its place (Baum, March 4, 2002). This project has examined the operations in the 1990s not simply as a historical exercise, but as important strands of public argument that retain the ability to be repeated in times of national crises. This next section traces those strategies from the Clinton administration's Operations Other Than War to the Bush administration's War on Terrorism.

Gendered Appeals

When, in the spring of 1999, the State and Defense Departments described reports of rape camps in Kosovo, they participated in a burgeoning effort to embrace the political utility of gendered violence as a justification for military action. In the fall of 2001, the denial of social and economic rights was added to gendered violence to form the primary evidence for an American operation. This time, however, the appeal came neatly packaged as a campaign from The Coalition Information Center, an international public relations operation designed to "provide an around-the-clock rapid response to help harness the 24-hour news cycle during the war on terrorism" (MSNBC, November 17, 2001).

Like Kosovo, the basic charge of abuse against women had already been firmly established among international human rights organizations. Under the Taliban women were denied even the most basic of political rights and faced severe punishment, including death, for violating Taliban or family law. The campaign, led by White House

advisor Karen Hughes, included public statements from the first ladies of the US and Britain, Laura Bush and Cherie Blair, and a State Department report cataloging the atrocities committed under Taliban rule. Once again, media organizations noted the political motivation of such an operation, such as *MSNBC's* report that the initiative was launched in response to "criticism that the Bush administration has not been paying enough attention to the public relations side of its war on terrorism" (November 17, 2001), even as they developed their stories that closely followed the administration's lead.

The charges in Kosovo helped distract from a potentially dangerous period in the bombing campaign and the Afghanistan campaign successfully diversified the administration's appeals as ground operations commenced. Laura Bush's national radio address argued that the War on Terrorism was directly linked to the struggle for women's rights, "The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women" (Bush, L., 2001). Merging the Taliban and al Quada, Bush explained "The brutal oppression of women is a central goal of the terrorists," and that an American victory was necessary to prevent the subordination of women worldwide, "Civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror … because in Afghanistan, we see the world the terrorists would like to impose on the rest of us" (Bush, L., 2001).

Both cases demonstrate the salience of gendered appeals in mollifying potentially hostile political forces. Stephen Hess described the administration's strategy as "quite brilliant," specifically "The idea of turning it into a women's issue and virtually

neutralizing the normal opposition" (Brookings/Harvard, February 27, 2002). Elizabeth Bumiller of *The New York Times* concurred, "on this issue, at least, the White House has silenced its critics" because it deprived the opposition of any viable political position; after all, "Who could be against the rights for the long-oppressed women of Afghanistan?" (Bumiller, November 19, 2001). Capitalizing on the extensive campaigns of several organizations, the administration was able to embrace the positions of groups like the National Organization for Women and the Feminist Majority Foundation, and it provided an opportunity for prominent activists, like Mavis Leno, to become unofficial spokespersons for the administration.

Among the most important gendered representations in this coverage are the first ladies themselves. At the same time that the campaign hailed advances for women in Afghanistan, it also allowed the first lady to transgress a historical boundary, as the Feminist Majority Foundation proclaimed "for the first time in history, the first lady delivered the presidential radio address to the nation" (November 19, 2001). This violation of traditional norms allows the administration to portray a commitment to women's concerns both domestically and internationally. Nicholas Horrock of *The Washington Times* explains,

> By asking Mrs. Bush to deliver the weekly presidential radio address, the White House made an important symbolic choice. Mrs. Bush epitomizes the very things the Taliban and the al Qaida chose to punish women for. She is educated, holding advanced university degrees, has had a professional career equal to a man's and has two daughters that she helped educate (November 17, 2001).

This symbolism embraces the language of international human rights, but it also functions domestically. Laura Bush may speak in a public forum, but by limiting her remarks to relatively uncontroversial international matters, she can advance a conservative representation of women's roles in a manner that is warmly received by mainstream women's groups. One anonymous Senator described the wisdom of the effort,

> You've got a very traditional first lady who is aligning herself with the women's rights movement around the world, and without having to go very far out on a limb she can gain some points by being supportive" (Bumiller, November 19, 2001).

This dynamic represents the comparison between representations of gender in Republican and Democratic administrations. The campaign assumed a new importance for a Republican administration, trying to bridge the gender gap that has plagued it in recent elections, because according Bush advisor Karen Hughes, "women who might not have previously wanted to support the president can see him in a different light" (Bumiller, November 19, 2001).

Unfortunately, the visibility afforded gendered issues in both cases disappeared as military operations moved beyond a high moment of political vulnerability. Not only were the women of Afghanistan strategically employed as props, literally in the case of Cherie Blair's press briefing with Afghan women, they disappeared almost entirely from public commentary as the war progressed. Stories that once emphasized the burka, or traditional full-body garment, as "the most visible symbol of the Taliban's oppressive

regime," (Lacayo, November 25, 2001) no longer reported that few women have stopped the wearing the garment for fear of reprisals (Goodwin).

Just as the Clinton administration's public interest in rape prosecutions declined after the Kosovo war, this administration failed to publicize how the much-heralded new Ministry of Women's Affairs has no operating budget and is routinely marginalized by the rulings of more powerful agencies, such as the decision of the new interior ministry that women must receive permission of their male relatives before traveling or applying for passports (Goodwin, April 29, 2002). By the spring of 2002, both Human Rights Watch's reports of a "wave of killing, rape and widespread ethnic persecution" and NOW's rebuke of the token presence of two women in the thirty member interim government (Hanford, 2002) failed to gain widespread media attention or provoke another public appearance from the First Lady. The employment of chivalry appears a tempting rhetorical strategy for political leaders, perhaps a new millennium requires that scholars move beyond mere satisfaction with placing gendered violence on the international agenda; a position where it may be strategically utilized and then disregarded.

The End of Temporality

Just as George H.W. Bush once proclaimed that the Gulf War would help remove Saddam Hussein from power, his son George initially launched Operation Enduring Freedom to not only defeat the al Quada, but also to capture or kill its leader, Osama bin

Laden. In the days immediately following the attacks, George W. recalled the old west 'Wanted: Dead or Alive' posters as his inspiration "to find them and hunt them down" (ABC News, September 17, 2001). For both presidents, however, the decision to personalize the war's objectives would ultimately need to be reduced amidst more manageable goals.

When Clinton inherited the Iraqi problem, he too spoke of the need to remove Hussein, but containment ultimately proved to be a more defendable explanation for the administration's policy. George W. would also adopt a configurational narrative that specifically negated chronological indicators,

> This is going to be a long struggle. I keep saying that; I don't know if you all believe me or not. But time will show you that it's going to take a long time to achieve this objective (March 13, 2002).

Both Clinton and George W. found it difficult, however, to completely replace temporal narratives. Just as Clinton mixed the need to degrade and contain, Bush diminished bin Laden, "our war against terror is far greater than one person" (March 1, 2002) and simultaneously explained the wide range of international efforts as part of a larger strategy to find him, "we're hunting him down" (March 1, 2002).

The challenge for Bush is to extend the privileged interpretation of the war's aims against those who might hold him accountable for the successful capture of bin Laden. Media reports have noted this change in strategy, such as Judy Keen's *USA Today* story that began, "There are six syllables that President Bush doesn't want to say aloud: Osama bin Laden" (April 12, 2002), but they have yet to assert that this constitutes a major

shortcoming in the war effort. Instead, the war's many theaters have allowed it to become about more than bin Laden and the result is an indefinite war footing, boosted by two trillion dollars worth of new defense spending over the next decade (Gleckman, February 5, 2002).

This effort to broaden the war's goals incorporates regime change as a configurational benchmark. Instead of relying on bin Laden's capture, which might mark some kind of conclusion, the overthrow of the Taliban can be understood as the success of the war's first stage. In this way, personalizing bin Laden's status not only makes the American effort look incomplete, but, perhaps more dangerous, it also holds the potential to offer an *end* to the conflict. To be successful, this broader war campaign must replace temporal assessments with a series of individual campaigns, each with their own goals. According to President Bush

> There is no silver bullet, no single event or action that is going to suddenly make the threat of terrorism disappear. This broad-based and sustained effort will continue until terrorism is rooted out. The situation is similar to the Cold War, when continuous pressure from many nations caused communism to collapse from within. We will press the fight as long as it takes. We will prevail (2001).

Without a single bullet or a single capture as its endpoint, the administration has developed a far more ambitious configurational appeal than Clinton's containment narrative.

In a rich historical irony, the effort to incite a regime change in Iraq may provide an opportunity to help redefine the war away from a sole focus on bin Laden and the

Taliban. The Bush administration has, through official and unofficial channels, argued that a major confrontation is overdue. *Time*, declared "The White House has concluded that Saddam poses a clear and present danger that must be eliminated" (McGeary, May 4, 2002). Iraq was featured prominently as part of the Axis of Evil and *The New York Times* reported efforts to develop a major air and ground campaign in 2003 (Shanker & Sanger, April 28, 2002). Even the more cautious Secretary of State Colin Powell explained the difference between Iraq and the other axis of evil members, "With respect to Iran and with respect to North Korea, there is no plan to start a war with these nations" (Gordon & Sanger, February 13, 2002). For *Time* magazine, action may not be "imminent" but perhaps "inevitable" as, "The selling of Gulf War II has already begun" (Karon, February 13, 2002).

The Clinton administration labored for a decade to present a narrative structure that could explain its need to continually use force against Iraq, but left enough space to evade responsibility for never resolving the conflict. The Bush administration faces a similar challenge; in order to maintain support it must replace chronological indicators with spatial references that explain the war's progress. The Clinton experience offers support for the belief that without some additional exigence, such as large numbers of American casualties, media coverage alone may not pierce the developing configurational narrative.

Somalia and the Civilian – Military Balance

It is unquestionably significant that no popular or scholarly criticism has examined the fallout from the operations in Somalia from the standpoint of civilian control over the military. In each case a more compelling story is apparent; powerful images, imperialist rhetoric, undeserving Africans, incompetent international organizations, or the inexperience of the Clinton administration. As these other themes play out in the new war, the doctrine of civilian control becomes even more ephemeral.

When *Black Hawk Down* grossed over one hundred million dollars in domestic markets, it provided a powerful draft of history and added a powerful tale of American heroism to popular culture. The bravery of American troops worked to enhance the image of the American military as capable of success, if allowed the freedom to do so. The *Guardian's* George Monbiot argues that the Ridley Scott production "is the story the American people need to tell themselves" as "America is casting itself simultaneously as the world's savior and the world's victim; a sacrificial messiah, on a mission to deliver the world from evil" (January 29, 2002). This dual savior/victim role dominated the media representations of the film in the spring of 2002, especially when news from the war in Afghanistan most closely resembled operations in Somalia.

During an early March raid, a Navy Seal fell from a helicopter and during the ensuing fight, he and six more troops were killed. This event provided an opportunity for media coverage to tease out what the metaphor of 'Somalia' currently represents. *The New York Times* titled its story, "Rumsfeld Burdened by Stifling Echoes of the Grisly

Raid in Somalia" (Gordon, March 7, 2002) and detailed Rumsfeld's reasons why this operation, as part of the larger campaign, bore no resemblance to the Somalia operation. Michael Gordon then offered his own comparison, "This time the Pentagon is engaged in a war that has a clear purpose" and "This time the cause is broadly supported by the American public," as well Rumsfeld's conclusion that "What's important about this is that the United States of America did not decide to withdraw and leave the field" (March 7, 2002).

Clarity of purpose, broad support and a determined administration: these are the reasons articulated why the War on Terrorism is not like the operation in Somalia. These narratives, however, continue to substitute for a discussion of the relationship of civilian and military authorities. Although Rumsfeld is now firmly entrenched as a heroic and masculine civilian authority, his early days in the administration appeared to offer some similarities with Aspin. Although his conservative background provided him some insulation to feminizing representations, his proposal to radically review strategic planning threatened to label him as a dreaded civilian analyst (Peterson Ulrich & Crane, 2002, p. 59). His effectiveness and ability to lead the military were in question until he became a wartime official, perhaps offering more doubts about the ability of even a Republican administration to maintain public confidence in their ability to maintain control over the military.

Even now, controversies between Rumsfeld and uniformed personnel continue in full public view, but these stories appear as questions of strategic planning, not as debates

over the propriety of military actions. When, for example, Army Secretary Tom White attempted to lobby Congress to continue the Crusader artillery system, in direct opposition to Rumsfeld's stated intentions, *CNN* explained Rumsfeld's anger because "White had operated behind their backs or was incapable running his department" without reference to the importance of the military's chain of command, instead explaining that Republican lawmakers intend to continue supporting White and the Crusader (Starr, May 7, 2002). *The Washington Post* employed Rumsfeld's use of the phrase "inappropriate lobbying" but placed the controversy squarely between Congressional Republicans, the military and Rumsfeld, choosing to emphasize the philosophical divide between views of future military programs, instead of any consideration of the propriety of military lobbying (Loeb & Nakashima, May 8, 2002).

Only *USA Today* included a brief reference from a policy analyst who mentioned the importance of military protocol and wondered aloud, "Is there one standard for the officer corps and one standard for civilian leaders" (Wiesman & Page, May 7, 2002). As Somalia becomes popular shorthand for the heroism of American soldiers, pressing questions of how civilians can manage the military remain indecipherable or uninteresting to the mass media.

Looking Forward: Dissent and the New Patriotism

This project has examined rhetorical dimensions of America's military operations, not so much as a historical venture, but to provide a more complex understanding of how American public discourse functions when it presents unitary views of American political identity. The circumstances that require the United States to employ force may change, but the types of appeals needed to support those campaigns tend to follow similar patterns. Gender becomes a new way to accentuate savagery to a population that is increasingly numb to violence. Time continues to pose problems for administration's bent on long-term planning. Their need to suppress time with the beacons of a particular event will endure. Finally, if and when, defeat occurs it has become easy to blame those faceless civilian bureaucrats, even as the young people who die are held up as their accusers.

All of these strategies will become difficult for critics to isolate in particular strands of popular discourse. The era of identifying independent agendas from the media and military may have also been buried in the sands of Saudi Arabia. These speculations about the War on Terrorism are only a rough sketch of how these strategies may be deployed in the future. In order to continue this line of investigation critics must be willing to search for strategies across cultural expressions.

This project was originally intended to offer a cautionary tale for critics of future military operations. The events of the past year have unfortunately accelerated the need for such criticism and placed a high burden on media scholars. Michael McGee's

observation that societies wage war rhetorically by cutting off part of themselves is no longer purely theoretical; the dominant representation of a unified America presents a host of challenges for those seeking a debate over the future of American foreign policy.

Voices both in and outside of the media argue that the current unity is fleeting, such as CNN's William Schneider who believes the war will become more political as it advances, relying in part on polling data that suggests an invasion of Iraq could be controversial (April 4, 2002). Rutgers University political scientist Ross Baker concurs, believing that the much-anticipated truce between the political parties never really took place after the attacks (Brownstein, January 24, 2002). In addition to relying on questionable polls, these assessments assume that the contentious nature of American politics will be sufficient to provide a plurality of voices. [23] It is difficult to deny that the major political parties are fiercely competitive, as demonstrated by the spectacle following the 2000 presidential election, but the question remains: if America is represented as united, how can dissent rupture that harmony?

Senator Majority Leader Tom Daschle has become the highest-ranking political figure to test openly the national consensus when he questioned if the war could be a success without the capture of Osama bin Laden and Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar. The response from the new patriots was as rapid as it was decisive. Through a spokesperson, Senator Trent Lott responded,

> How dare Sen. Daschle criticize President Bush and our war on terrorism, especially when we have U.S. troops on the ground … Our country is united, and Sen. Daschle should not attempt to divide us (Karl & Bash, February 28, 2002).

Daschle's spokespeople denied "any daylight between him and the president" (Karl & Bash, February 28, 2002), a position more consistent with Daschle's call for Democratic candidates for the House of Representatives to run alongside Bush's war record and only draw divisions on domestic issues (Schneider, January 6, 2002). Less than a year before the heavily front-loaded Democratic presidential primaries, the only noticeable division between potential Democratic candidates is that some, including former Vice President Al Gore, Daschle, and House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, have offered broad support for Bush's policies and others, including Senators Joseph Lieberman, John Kerry and Joseph Biden, have attempted to outflank the administration by calling for more decisive military initiatives, especially with regard to Iraq (Brownstein, November 1, 2001). It is no longer a question of if the national political dialogue will include anti-war voices; perhaps a more appropriate concern is if voices can counsel any nuanced changes.

The urgency of representing the national political culture as unified does not only include those seeking high political office. Attorney General John Ashcroft has extended the process of otherization to the American populace.

> To those who pit Americans against immigrants, and citizens against non-citizens; to those who scare peace-loving people with phantoms of lost liberty; my message is this: Your tactics only aid terrorists - for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to America's enemies, and pause to America's friends. They encourage people of good will to remain silent in the face of evil (December 6, 2001).

The search for 'those people' who attempt to weaken American resolve by eroding national unity has already turned to the nation's schools. Consider the American Council of Trustees and Alumni's interpretation of who stands against the newly composed and not-so silent majority

> The polls have been nearly unanimous ... and citizens have rallied behind the President wholeheartedly. Not so in academe …While America's elected officials from both parties and media commentators from across the spectrum condemned the attacks and followed the president in calling evil by its righteous name, many faculty demurred. Some refused to make judgments … Some even pointed accusatory fingers, not at the terrorists, but at America itself" (Martin & Neal, p. 1).

Their primary recommendation, the resurgence of civics education in America's schools has become a new Bush administration initiative (Milbank, May 12, 2002).

When columnists describe resistance as "political suicide" (Milligan, December 3, 2001), how can expect politicians to question American goals and objectives? What terrain is available for citizens when news and entertainment present eerily similar views or when reality television offers us the personal stories of American troops in Afghanistan even as Sylvester Stallone prepares the script for Rambo IV: Rambo's return to Afghanistan (Wolf, November 13, 2001)? As total television provides endless, free opportunities for new public relations initiatives academic critics must continue the task of locating and tracing prominent rhetorical devices, even if they complicate issues that appear to be supported by a consensus.

At a time when few voices appear willing to ask these questions and engage this project, Robert Ivie has continued his decades long work of examining how America

communicates war. He considers the problem of dissent on college campuses to be one of too little, and not too much, and leaves us with a limited, but useful goal for the long campaign ahead.

> All we can hope to do is to hold our limited perspectives accountable to one another, to retain an agonistic edge, especially where the presence of one relatively narrow point of view or profile threatens to overtake our collective conscience and dominate our political consciousness. Thus, we should stand ever-ready to critique the language that constitutes extreme attitudes of Othering … (March 25, 2002).

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[1] The project uses 'the 1990s' as an abbreviation for the historical period marked by the relatively unfettered capacity of the United States to engage in limited military operations that did not directly threaten the United States. This period would be more precisely understood as beginning on November 11, 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and ended on September 11, 2001.

[2] Numerous works of this genre explore the Rambo character; for example, see Turner's discussion, p. 89-94. One of the most compelling accounts of Rambo and other film characters as expressions of masculinity can be found in Susan Jeffords (1994), *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

[3] See, for example, Braestrup and Hallin.

[4] By contemporary, this project refers to post Gulf War scholarship and in most cases addresses work published in the immediate Gulf War period. Some examples of the tendency to continue to view foreign policy addresses interpedently of media or cultural fragments include Pollack's discussion of Bush's rewriting of Vietnam as a rhetorical event, German's efforts to detail directive language as a central term of presidential discourse, and Kane's examination of how Bush's war rhetoric "bought the Gulf War belief system more time" (p. 87).

[5] Alternatively, this effort could be read as extending the genre of presidential war discourse into these mediated conflicts by contending that a mimetic relationship exists between the expectations of military operations and the attendant discourse that justifies their means. Mimesis plays a useful role in bridging the gap between discussions of representations and reality. Several theorists have contended that Plato's criticism of mimesis in the *Republic* can be read beyond a simple indictment of poetic form and instead understood as the "process whereby all men learn" (McLuhan and McLuhan, p. 16). Eric Havelock draws a useful distinction between Plato's concern with the poetic style of composition and the efforts to educate the guardians who absorb lessons and are asked to imitate these instructions (p. 23). The process of imitation displaces the previous ground between the storyteller and the audience producing what Marshall and Eric McLuhan call a "new mode of being" where, "the 'thing known' ceases to be an object of attention and becomes instead a ground for the knower to put on" (p. 16). If military operations can be understood as embracing a mimetic form, whereby its viewers understand it through the patterns of imitation, then we can move beyond the limitations of bifurcating misrepresentations from authenticity and instead move toward the importance of the narrative's form. Jean-Pierre argues this movement is consistent with Aristotle's notion of imitation, which dispels a process of simple deception, instead emphasizing that if images are understood in relation to similar events and they become 'valid' as political myths (p. 45). Mimesis then serves as a way to view the tremendously fertile intersection of the narrative structure of appeals and the presence of strategic "misrepresentations."

[6]As critics examine the implications of mediated military operations, the role of the domestic audience is often called into question. For example, Der Derian contends that the virtual nature of conflicts "collapses space for the detached observer (p. xviii), while Caldarola describes the Gulf War as creating, "highly anxious spectator-participant experiences (p. 99-100) and both Keeble (p. 62) and Halberstam (p. 15-16) deem these conflicts as lacking a participatory basis

[7] Cordesman argues that Kosovo represents a second major example of airpower fought without a sizeable ground component, the first demonstrated by the British RAF's defeat of the Saudi Ikhawan on Transjordan in 1922 (48).

[8] Media accounts were derived from searches of the Lexis-Nexis database, beginning with the escalation of hostilities in March 1999.

[9] The closest that any president came to employing the legal machinery of war in this period was President George H.W. Bush's call for a congressional affirmation of his impending operations against Iraq in January 1991. Even this effort, however, took only the form of a non-binding congressional resolution.

[10] A great deal of literature has been devoted to the desirability of dual containment. For a sampling of accounts that discuss of the wisdom of containing Iraq see Brzezinski, Z., Murphy, R., & Scowcroft (1997); Byman (1996), Let Iraq Collapse, *National Interest*, 48-60; Contry, B. (1994); Gause, G. (1994); O'Sullivan (2001); & Walsh, D. (1998).

[11] Clinton's decision to launch a series of strikes against Iraq in December 1998 occurred almost simultaneously with congressional deliberations of his potential impeachment. The confluence of events encouraged discussion of a politically motivated diversion from the impeachment spectacle. See Duffy, 1998 for a discussion.

[12] The Bush administration offered a series of standards for the coalition effort, including the full Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, the restoration of Kuwait's government, a desire to protect the security of Persian Gulf, and the need to protect lives of American citizens abroad (Bush, 1990). The protection of Persian Gulf security, defined largely around the uninterrupted access to Middle Eastern oil supplies, also included the need to prevent Iraq's development of weapons of mass destruction (Atkinson, 1993, pp. 296-298).

[13] Learning from this grossly insensitive strategy, military planning during the Gulf War specifically avoided discussions of enemy casualties, even in General Schwarzkopf's final war briefing (Birch, 1993, pp. 139-140).

[14] Matthew Harmon (1999), for example, examines the real-time crisis of the Sarajevo market massacre and concludes that temporal distance from the actual event provided the Clinton administration with a great deal more flexibility than popularly attributed. In the specific case of the Somali famine, Jim Naureckas (1993) provides insightful evidence that media coverage dramatically increased only after American military equipment was used to help distribute food supplies. Steven Livingston's (1997) conclusions about the 'CNN effect' are a useful voice of caution in this regard. His research demonstrates that examinations must account not only the specific function of media coverage (agenda-setting, impediment or accelerant) but also for the type of military intervention before any firm conclusions can be drawn.

[15] Other useful accounts of are operation are found in Retired Colonel David Hackworth's (1996) *Hazardous Duty* and Elizabeth Drew's (1994) *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*. Hackworth's methods parallel Bowden's as they both utilize interviews with veterans of the operation as their primary source of information. Drew's account explores the reaction to the breaking news in Washington among the Clinton administration.

[16] http://inquirer.philly.com/packages/somalia/sitemap.asp

[17] Some prominent examples include: Mickey Klaus, (January 21, 2002). "What Black Hawk Down Leaves Out. "*Slate Magazine*, Fred McKissack Jr., (March 2002). "Celluloid Somalia" *The Progressive*, Adrian Brune, (February 21, 2002) "Protesting *Black Hawk Down*" *The Nation.*

[18] A tremendous body of literature has been devoted to debating the question of a crisis in civilian control. For further information on this debate, see the extensive literature review in Lindsay Cohn (1999) "The Evolution of the Civil-Military "Gap" Debate." Paper Presented for the TISS project on the Gap Between the Military and Civilian Society. For publications since that work, review: Peter D. Feaver & Richard M. Kohn (eds). (2001). *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap in American National Security*. Cambridge: MIT Press and the collection of articles in the Winter 2001 special edition of *Armed Forces and Society* (27:2).

[19] Several different strands of responsibility were explored in media coverage, including U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (McIntyre, October 4, 1993) and retired Admiral Jonathan Howe (Rather, October 4, 1993). This chapter examines the coverage of Aspin's responsibility because it offers a means of exploring the issue of civilian control. It should also be noted that the administration eventually regained some control over the public explanation of events, thus muting charges about the UN's role in directing American foreign policy. For example, after Clinton announced the additional troop deployment would be

part of a larger program to withdraw all American troops within six months a number of voices began to support the administration's policy, including Dole and *The Los Angeles Times* (Cox News Service, October 8, 1993; The Los Angeles Times, October 8, 1993).

[20] It should be noted that he responsibility for making the armor request appeared under dispute in the initial coverage. *The Boston Globe* reported the recently retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell requested reinforcements, but Clinton argued that Powell never made any comments to him regarding additional troop deployment (Kranish, October 9, 1993). Clinton further explained that Aspin indicated that there was no consensus among the Joint Chiefs about the need for additional deployments and that the tanks were described as necessary for offensive purposes (Kranish, October 9, 1993; Lancaster, October 9, 1993). *Newsweek's* Elliot similarly described Montgomery's request as something that Powell now supported and that "might have saved the rangers" (October 18, 1993). This is contradicted by comments made by Pentagon officials to *U.S. News & World Report* that indicate that no senior military officials, including Powell, advised Aspin to support the request (Lief, October 18, 1993).

[21] The significance of the armor in minimizing American casualties is a subject of continued debate. In his letter taking responsibility for the raid, General Garrison contends that the majority of American casualties occurred in the early stages of the operation, when the armor would have minimal impact (Gordon, October 28, 1993). Bowden contends that any simple assessment of responsibility for the types of equipment involved in the operation is mistaken; contending instead that the broader mission parameters should have revisited (p. 355). A substantial argument continues to be made, however, that the presence of armored vehicles would have allowed the troops to have rescued the helicopter crews and exit the city much quicker than they were able. For examples of this argument see Maj. Clifford Day (1997) 'A Critical Analysis on the Defeat of Task Force Ranger' and Hackworth (1996).

[22] In the wake of September 11th, JAG moved from 28th to 10th in weekly ratings.

[23] Public opinion polls have repeatedly shown strong support for an aggressive military campaign against Iraq. A long succession of Gallup polls, for example, has found that Americans overwhelmingly about Iraq and that concerns about what the best course of action generally fade if the United States was prepared to launch such an attack (See for example, Chambers, February 16, 200; Moore, February 18, 1998; Moore, November 26, 1997). In 1998, for example, 76% of respondents indicated they would support such an attack (Moore, February 18, 1998). The unpopularity of such an attack is also called into question by the perceived electoral utility of unifying one's opponents with Hussein, for example, as a South Dakota newspaper ad compared Daschle to Saddam Hussein because both would oppose drilling in Alaska's National Wildlife Refuge (Curry November 7, 2001).