

# Reading the President's Mind: Interpreting National Intent from Patterns and Landmarks, 1987-1996

A Monograph

by

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## Abstract

Reading the President's Mind: Interpreting National Intent from Patterns and Landmarks, 1987-1995, by MAJ Mark D. Gillman, US Army, 44 pages.

This monograph identifies signals of national intent during military planning. In times of crisis, national policy is a moving target, especially for military planners trying to anticipate policy and align operations with it. Fortunately, when it comes to committing America's ground forces, there have been observable patterns and useful landmarks on the 'road-to-war' in Panama (1989), the Gulf War (1991), Haiti (1994), and Bosnia (1995). Patterns and landmarks enable planners to interpret what the President wants the military to do and when by providing termination criteria and timeline guidance. The crisis-response pattern of crisis, political response, military planning response, and catalyst, depicts US prerequisites for war. Landmarks like United Nations resolutions, presidential elections, treaties and national agreements, rise above the noise of the hyper-information environment and clarify real policy. Speeches from NCA figures are not reliable landmarks. Politically astute officers, in cooperation with interagency partners and legal counsel, are best suited to identify patterns and landmarks that clarify national intent.

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## Acronyms

10 MTN DIV	10 <sup>th</sup> Mountain Division
ABN	Airborne
AFSOUTH	Allied Forces Southern Europe
ARCENT	Army Central
BPLAN	Base Plan (Level II)
CAP	Crisis Action Plan
CAT	Crisis Action Team
CINC	Commander In Chief
CENTCOM	Central Command
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
COA	Course of Action
COMCMOTF	Commander, Civil Military Operations Task Force
CONPLAN	Concept Plan (Level III)
DoS	Department of State
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EUCOM	European Command
FM	Field Manual
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
HNP	Haitian National Police
IFOR	Implementation Force
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JTF	Joint Task Force
JTF HAG	Joint Task Force Haiti Action Group
JTFSO	Joint Task Force South
LNO	Liaison Officer

LST	Tank Landing Ship
NSS	National Security Strategy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCA	National Command Authority
NEO	Non-combatant Evacuation Operation
NORTHCOM	US Northern Command
OAS	Organization of American States
OPLAN	Operations Plan (Level IV)
OPORD	Operations Order (Level IV with dates)
PDF	Panamanian Defense Force
PLANORD	Planning Order
SJA	Staff Judge Advocate
SOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
TIF	Treaties in Force
TPFDD	Time-Phased Force Deployment Data
USACOM	United States Atlantic Command
UN	United Nations
UNMIH	United Nations Mission in Haiti
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protective Force
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USARSO	United States Army-Southern
USAEUR	United States Army Europe

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## Introduction

National policy is like that section of highway you hate to drive on—it’s always under construction. On August 5, 1990, three days after Iraq invaded Kuwait, President George H. W. Bush told his generals, “This will not stand.”<sup>1</sup> This broad, principled statement exemplifies unfinished policy.<sup>2</sup> President Bush’s words could hardly be interpreted as an order to attack, but they did not call for inaction either. In times of crisis, national policy is a moving target, especially for military planners trying to anticipate policy and align operations with it.

Iraq’s invasion of their former province was a new wrinkle forcing the President to make a decision. There were many opportunities and risks to consider and many governmental departments considering them. The Department of Agriculture’s \$1B food program for Iraq, suspended the previous May, now seemed doomed. The Department of Defense, having seen warning signs, was most concerned about Persian Gulf oil access and defending their key ally, Saudi Arabia.<sup>3</sup> The Department of State sought “diplomatic consensus” on Iraq with many nations, including Russia, who themselves were in the midst of a large arms deal with Iraq.<sup>4</sup> The Cold War had just ended, and this crisis presented an opportunity to exploit the change. There were also regional concerns about human rights issues, nuclear nonproliferation safeguards, and foreign affairs in Lebanon at stake.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Colin L. Powell, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 466.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew C. Gaetke, “Certainty is Illusion: The Myth of Strategic Guidance,” Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2015, 34. Gaetke’s argument is that we should not expect strategic guidance to be otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> George H. W. Bush, “National Security Directive 54, Subject: Responding to Iraqi Aggression in the Gulf,” George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, January 15, 1991, accessed February 1, 2017, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/nsd/nsd54.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> James A. Baker III, *The Politics of Diplomacy* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1995), 10.

<sup>5</sup> George H. W. Bush, “National Security Directive 26, Subject: US Policy Towards the Persian Gulf,” George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, October 2, 1989, accessed February 1, 2017, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/nsd/nsd26.pdf>.

Military planners often draft war plans during crises, when the ‘military option’ is still only an option, and when national policy is still under development. For planners, accurately aligning military operations with political objectives requires knowing what those objectives are. Crisis planning presents an environment where the fundamental questions of political termination criteria and timeline are unknowns.<sup>6</sup> The military does not yet know if they will be involved, nor when, nor what mission they will assume. From available guidance, planners must deduce answers to these fundamental questions along the way, making assumptions about the ‘what’ and the ‘when’ from policy that is still in flux.

This monograph identifies signals of national intent during military planning, especially during crises. When it comes to committing America’s ground forces over the last thirty years, there have been observable patterns and useful landmarks on the ‘road-to-war’ in Panama (1989), the Gulf War (1991), Haiti (1994), and Bosnia (1995). These patterns contain four distinct phases that precede large-scale commitment: a crisis event, some political response, military war planning, and some catalyst triggering troop deployment. Road-to-war patterns are punctuated with a series of events and key decisions, collectively called landmarks. The best examples of landmarks are United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCR), presidential elections, and national agreements such as treaties. These patterns and landmarks provide pivotal details regarding the ‘what’ and ‘when’ of potential military operations. Recognizing patterns and landmarks on the road to war can assist planners at every echelon to more rapidly align military operations with often elusive national aims.

The boundaries of this study frame the applicability of patterns and landmarks. The findings of this paper are most relevant to new theater, large-scale ground war planning. New theaters are geographic locations where the military is not already actively conducting large-scale ground operations. For example, at the present time, Iraq and Afghanistan are not considered new

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<sup>6</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, xxii. Termination criteria “describe the conditions that must exist...at the cessation of military operations.” They are the political objectives of war.

theaters. The following case studies only consider the planning environment for operations that actually happened, specifically “war plans” that were ultimately executed.<sup>7</sup> War, in this case, is “whatever the military does” to further political aims.<sup>8</sup> The ‘road to war’ implies the lead-up to any new-theater military crisis within the range of military operations. This study applies to the first four operations post Goldwater-Nichols Act, which legislated the contemporary command structure of joint operations. Finally, the scope is limited to wars involving large-scale ground forces, which doctrinally means a division-sized element or more.<sup>9</sup> From the patterns and landmarks on the road to war in Panama, the Persian Gulf, Haiti, and Bosnia show that these signals help interpret the President’s intentions about what the military will do and when.

This paper is organized in three sections. The first section of this paper explains the doctrinal context of military planning including planning responsibilities, types of plans, and levels of planning detail. The second section describes the crisis-response pattern on the road to war, discussing key events and decisions leading up to four wars and their impact on military planning. The third section identifies and explains the landmarks for the same four wars and how they help planners anticipate national policy.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert A. Gleckler, “Why War Plans, Really?” *Joint Force Quarterly* 79 (4<sup>th</sup> QTR 2015): 75. LTC Gleckler describes the type of plans discussed in this paper. “War plans are developed in response to direction from the highest levels. They are designed to meet real threats in the near term, are developed by the responsible regional combatant command, formally staffed for comment, and reviewed by the Secretary of Defense or Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.”

<sup>8</sup> Rosa Brooks, *How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything: Tales from the Pentagon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016), 260; Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 75. Quotation from Brooks, who argues that the common definition of war has taken on new meaning during the US experience with counterinsurgency operations. Clausewitz’s historical definition still applies, that war is “politics by other means.”

<sup>9</sup> US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0 C1, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 5-3. Not to be confused with Large-Scale Combat Operations, this term only references the size of the ground force committed to a conflict.

## Doctrinal Foundations of Planning

Planning doctrine is not the focus here, but rather the context within which planners use doctrine to plan operations aligned with national policy. This section will explain the doctrinal context of planning responsibilities, types of plans, and levels of detail. The recommendations section will further comment on shortcomings of joint and army manuals JP 5-0 and FM 6-0.

The commander of each Geographic Combatant Command (GCC), with the assistance of their staff, is responsible for military plans for operations within their boundaries.<sup>10</sup> There are six such commands that cover the globe.<sup>11</sup> GCC staffs prepare ready-made plans for anticipated situations, known as contingency plans.<sup>12</sup> The NCA directs planning priorities, but a GCC may also self-identify contingencies and create plans for them.<sup>13</sup> Planning in non-time constrained environments is called deliberate planning. General Tommy Franks, Commander-in-Chief (CINC) of CENTCOM during initial operations in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), stated he had “more than a dozen” such plans on the shelf before the September 11, 2001 crisis.<sup>14</sup>

For unforeseen situations, GCC staffs create crisis action plans (CAP) under severe time constraints. Within the staff, Joint Publication 5-0 says that “generally” the plans directorate (J-5) drafts deliberate contingency plans and that the operations directorate (J-3) prepares CAP.<sup>15</sup> During the case study period of 1987-1996, plans were the purview of the J-3, and the J-5 was the

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<sup>10</sup> US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), E-4.

<sup>11</sup> The six GCCs are Northern Command (NORTHCOM), Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), Africa Command (AFRICOM), Europe Command (EUCOM), Central Command (CENTCOM), and Pacific Command (PACOM).

<sup>12</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, GL-7. Definition from the glossary. “Contingency Plan: A branch of a campaign plan that is planned based on hypothetical situations for designated threats, catastrophic events, and contingent missions outside of crisis conditions.”

<sup>13</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, V-4.

<sup>14</sup> Tommy R. Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 2004), 251.

<sup>15</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, V-31.

policy, strategy, and programs directorate. At some point prior to execution, a GCC will generally delegate responsibility for more detailed planning and execution to a Joint Task Force (JTF) or a component command, as appropriate.

Joint plans contain varying levels of detail (see Figure 1). Level one plans are known as commander's estimates and contain the least detail. They generally include courses of action and a list of required forces. Level two plans, or base plans (BPLAN), further include a detailed concept of the operation, timeline, and a concept of support. Level three concept plans (CONPLAN) have more detail still, to include a proposed task organization, aspects relating to interagency coordination, and detailed troop information such as identifying specific types of units and their proposed deployment sequence. This information is called the Time-Phased Force Deployment Data (TPFDD). Franks used the words "hypothetical environment," "options," "concept," and "theory" to describe the level one, two, and three 'plans' his staff prepared for Operation Iraqi Freedom, which he considered 'non-plans' because they lacked sufficient detail.<sup>16</sup> Level 4 operations plans (OPLAN) are complete and detailed descriptions of the intended operation. When ready to execute, these plans are converted into Operations Orders (OPORD) with actual dates.<sup>17</sup> Level four plans like "OPORD 1003v," Franks remarked, are "something we could execute."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Franks, *American Soldier*, 425.

<sup>17</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, II-23-24.

<sup>18</sup> Franks, *American Soldier*, 425.

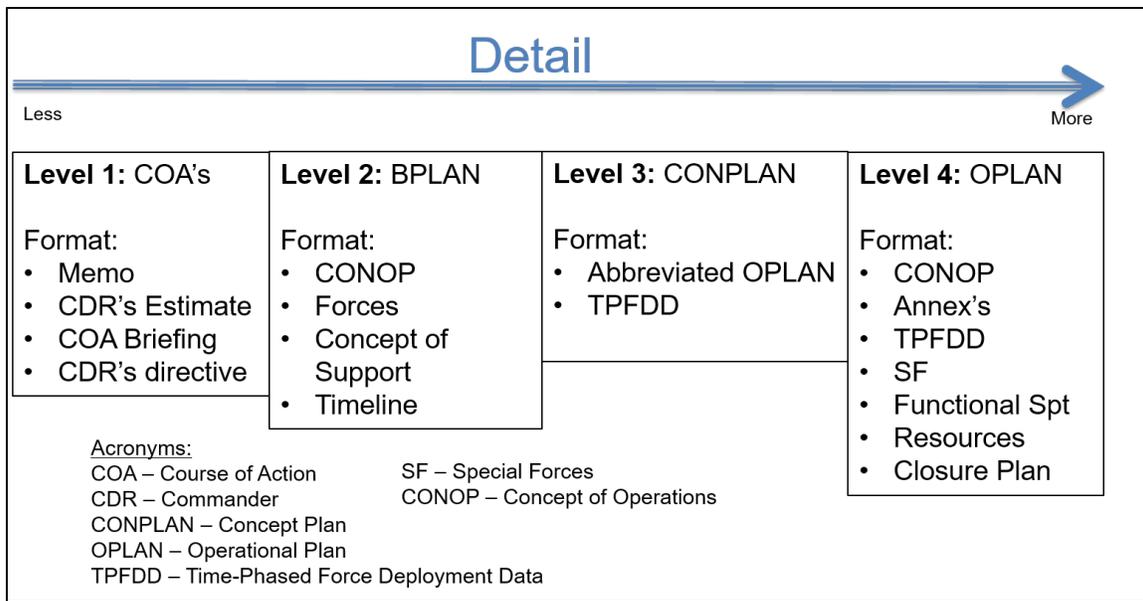


Figure 1. Four Levels of Joint Plans. Created by author, adapted from US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), II-23-24.

It is important to note that the headquarters that develops initial plans is often not the headquarters that executes them. This raises the need for close coordination between headquarters, as well as operational security to protect the information that is being shared. Field Manual (FM) 101-5, the controlling army planning manual from 1987-1996, stressed the importance of coordination and security during the planning process. Coordination “requires personal initiative, a spirit of cooperation, and the genuine interest of each staff member in achieving a unified effort.”<sup>19</sup> This is difficult to achieve when the various headquarters elements are not co-located. One doctrinal solution is the liaison officer (LNO), a transplanted representative from one command residing permanently in another, who “must always be mindful of his commander’s need for information to complete planning and coordination.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985), 4-4; US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), 4-6.

<sup>20</sup> US Army, FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations* (1985), 2-5; US Army, FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations* (1997), 4-27, L-4.

When crises occur, political decisions take time to formulate. A planner's duty is to rapidly make sense of the situation and develop viable solutions.<sup>21</sup> In practice, this is difficult to do without firm guidance. Given this environment, planners initial activities include dusting off existing contingency plans and making necessary modifications, or, more likely, starting from scratch to produce actionable orders within as little as a week. While the NCA orients to the unanticipated situation and clarifies their proposed response, planners must fill in the blanks and press forward along the road to possible war. Fortunately, there are patterns of events that can guide planners through this uncertainty.

### Patterns on the American Road to War

As military planners, we tend to focus our timelines on certain operational success measures...what I soon began to realized here, was ...the tempo of operations was being driven by a political timeline.

—COL John Lewis, SOUTHCOM lead planner for  
Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti

There is an empirical crisis-response pattern preceding modern US wars. The pattern is a collection of events and responses during a developing crisis. The pattern on the road to war has four phases: a crisis-inducing event [A], some political response [B], military crisis action planning [C], and a catalyzing event or decision [D] triggering military action. The order is not necessarily [A, B, C, D], nor does the pattern forbid actions from occurring simultaneously, but all four phases precede war. For example, after the sequence [A,B,C], the situation may then de-escalate before [D], only to repeat [A, B, C] several times over many years before the trigger [D] finally occurs.

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<sup>21</sup> US Army, FM 3-0 C1, *Operations*, 1-3. Planners must recognize that “operations serve a higher political purpose, and they should be planned and executed...to support that purpose. Without a clear understanding of the higher purpose, it is difficult to understand what must happen to consolidate gains.” Epigraph from John P. Lewis, *JTF-190 Operation Uphold Democracy Oral History Interviews*, ed. Cynthia L. Hayden (Fort Bragg: XVIII Airborne History, 1994), 215-228, accessed February 10, 2018, [https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/caribbeansea\\_csmep\\_05004/](https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/caribbeansea_csmep_05004/).

Each phase of the pattern has peculiar qualities. A crisis-inducing event has some military significance, threatening national interests in some way that may require military force to resolve. The nature of the crisis event varies: direct attacks on US citizens, challenges over strategic resources, threats to sovereignty, a responsibility to protect others from harm, et cetera. What is or is not a threat to national interests is subjectively interpreted by the NCA. The NCA only activates military CAP when they perceive an event to be a crisis, potentially requiring large-scale military action.

During the political response phase, national leadership applies diplomatic, informational, and/or economic pressure to resolve the situation. National leadership may also seek to legitimize actions through the United Nations (UN). The President seeks to solve international problems politically, but usually keeps military options open. For example, President Trump repeatedly responded to North Korea's missile tests in 2017 with the statement, "All options are on the table."<sup>22</sup>

The political response phase is accompanied by a formal military planning phase. In most cases, the US military does not plan to respond to a crisis with force and then inform their political leaders later. As evident from COL Lewis' quote, the political timeline drives the military planning timeline. The NCA asks the relevant commander for military options that involve the use of force.<sup>23</sup> In 2013, with vague guidance from politicians, General Martin Dempsey responded to requests for an "assessment of options for the potential use of military

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<sup>22</sup> John Wagner and Anna Fifield, "Trump: 'All Options are On the Table' After North Korea Launched Missile Over Japan," *Washington Post*, August 29, 2017, accessed February 7, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/08/29/trump-all-options-are-on-the-table-following-north-korea-missile-launch-over-japan/?utm\\_term=.caca8f80ebdd](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/08/29/trump-all-options-are-on-the-table-following-north-korea-missile-launch-over-japan/?utm_term=.caca8f80ebdd).

<sup>23</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 75. "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will"; William J. Slim, *Defeat Into Victory* (London: Papermac, 1987), 550. Viscount Slim provides a more contemporary definition of war, a "way of settling national disputes," only now with more advanced weapons.

force” to counter the Islamic State’s incursion into Iraq.<sup>24</sup> The military considers existing plans, surges planning efforts, and responds within a week or two with options. Following initial approval from the NCA, the relevant military commander refines the plan, publishes it to subordinate commands, and establishes a JTF to be prepared to execute. This all generally occurs within one to six weeks from the crisis event. Then the military continues preparations while waiting on the political trigger to execute.

The crisis-response pattern should raise planners’ awareness of how political decisions will impact military planning. In effect, the pattern binds politicians. All four phases must happen before war does. Policy, including the policy to go to war, is limited to what the President *can* do rather than what the President *wants* to do. Intentions are well covered in the media through speeches and statements, but capabilities matter more. Those must be inferred. Whether or not the NCA is prepared to commit a large military ground force, and if so, when, can be deduced from the crisis-response pattern on the road to war.

Applying this model chronologically to four conflicts from 1987-1996 reveals that the pattern is consistent regardless of the type of military operation and regardless of the political party of the US president. The road to war in Somalia (1992), while relevant to this time period, was deliberately omitted in order to demonstrate a balanced approach between Presidents of different parties. While every conflict is unique, the series of events, responses and decisions leading up to those conflicts tend to be the same.

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<sup>24</sup> Martin E. Dempsey, “Letter to US Senator Carl Levin,” July 19, 2013, accessed January 23, 2018, available [http://thehill.com/images/stories/news/2013/07\\_july/22/dempsey.pdf](http://thehill.com/images/stories/news/2013/07_july/22/dempsey.pdf). This unclassified letter was General Dempsey’s response to the Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman regarding how the military might respond to the nascent Islamic State actions in Iraq, where it captured the large Iraqi city of Mosul.

## Panama

The road to war in Panama contained several repetitions of the crisis-response pattern. United States-Panama relations continuously deteriorated from June 1987 through December 1989. US political positions gradually shifted in favor of military action as repeated outrages punctuated periods of military planning and plan revisions.

Political conditions in Panama began spiraling downward in June 1987. Colonel Diaz Herrera, a disaffected Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) Leader, made damaging public accusations linking General Manuel Noriega to murder and drug trafficking. This was the first crisis event, though it was not considered so by political leadership. Noriega, commander of the PDF and de facto dictator of Panama, responded harshly. When the US senate condemned Noriega's brutal response, a mob attacked the US embassy causing damage. Relations continued to sour between the 50,000 US soldiers and citizens living in Panama and their angry hosts. President Reagan restricted aid money to Panama in December 1987. Yet conditions had yet to reach the threshold of a crisis event. The US embassy continued fully manned operations, and political leaders gave no new planning guidance to the military. President Reagan's stated intentions were not to use military force against Noriega, and he never did.<sup>25</sup>

By November 1987, General Fred Woerner, CINC SOUTHCOM, decided to amend existing plans, which had long been formulated to contend with some third-party enemy threatening the canal.<sup>26</sup> Woerner instead suggested to his staff that plans should consider the

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas Donnelly, Margaret Roth, and Caleb Baker, *Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 17. Quote from General Woerner. "Every bone in my body said...you'd better be prepared."

<sup>26</sup> John T. Fishel, "Planning For Post-Conflict Panama: What It Tells Us About Phase IV Operations," in *Turning Victory into Success: Military Operations After the Campaign*, edited by Brian M. De Toy (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2005), 168-178. There were several SOUTHCOM plans related to Panama, each created for a different contingency. There was a plan for the evacuation of US citizens (Operation Klondike Key), a plan for the build up of troops as a show of force (Operation Post Time), a plan for combat operations to defend the Canal Zone (Operation Blue Spoon), and a plan for post-conflict reconstruction (Operation Krystal Ball). These were created simultaneously, and they were designed to be executed independently and interchangeably.

possibility that the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) could be hostile. Woerner's alteration was a military planning response without formal CAP orders. In January 1988, SOUTHCOM shared their plans with the operational headquarters that would likely them, the XVIII Airborne Corps (XVIII ABN).<sup>27</sup> This deliberate planning period lasted four months and did not result in a level-four plan at any echelon. This was an example of a crisis-response pattern where SOUTHCOM perceived a militarily significant event that the political leaders did not.

On February 5, 1988, two US federal courts formally indicted Noriega for drug trafficking, an undeniable crisis event. When Noriega refused to step down, the Panamanian government stalled. In the US, aside from the Department of Justice, the timing of this event came as a complete surprise to the rest of the government.<sup>28</sup> Two main issues concerned President Reagan. Noriega's close ties to the US government over the past two decades was now in tension with the US counternarcotic efforts and democracy advocacy. Furthermore, pending transfer of the Panama Canal to an adversarial government put that strategic asset at risk.<sup>29</sup>

The United States responded more harshly this time with economic and political pressure while the NCA determined a way forward. Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams advocated for "economic warfare." In March 1988, the United States placed revenues for the canal and for an oil pipeline owed to Panama in escrow, and further sanctions against Panama in April.<sup>30</sup> Vice President George H. W. Bush adamantly opposed any political deal trading peaceful power

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<sup>27</sup> According to SOUTHCOM, following the January briefing, XVIII ABN was unwilling to provide staff to augment US Army South (USARSO) in further plan. This reflected the low importance they attached to Panama and perhaps their impressions of the likelihood of execution.

<sup>28</sup> George P. Schultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1993), 13.

<sup>29</sup> Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 177-180.

<sup>30</sup> Lawrence A. Yates, *The US Military Intervention in Panama: Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management June 1987 – December 1989*, CMH Publication 55-1-1 (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2008), 20, 41-42.

abdication for sanction removal in May.<sup>31</sup> All the while, Noriega was defiant, defeating an attempted coup in March and continuing to consolidate power.

In parallel to political efforts, the NCA formally activated CAP in SOUTHCOM with a Planning Order (PLANORD) sent on February 28, 1988. Woerner surged planning efforts, presenting an initial draft to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on March 4, less than a week later. After two weeks of dialogue and refinement, this plan became SOUTHCOM OPORD 88-2, a conventional military plan to neutralize the PDF and capture Noriega.<sup>32</sup> As evidence of military misalignment with national intent, a “handful of majors and captains” developed it into an OPORD rather than an OPLAN because they believed it would be executed soon.<sup>33</sup> One echelon down, at US Army South (USARSO, designated Joint Task Force-Panama in late March 1988), planners completed their JTF-Panama OPORD 88-1 on March 21.<sup>34</sup> Two echelons down, XVIII ABN, began parallel planning in earnest in June. Planners from the XVIII ABN briefed their draft plan to SOUTHCOM about two months later. By August, urgency for operations in Panama seemed to abate.<sup>35</sup> November US Presidential elections were a looming distraction. President Reagan called for a strategic pause; Panama’s May 1989 elections might solve the problem.

The election of President Bush led to a new approach by new leadership. The President filled his cabinet with his own people. James Baker III became the Secretary of State in January 1989 followed by Dick Cheney as the Secretary of Defense in March. Also in March, another crisis occurred. A member of the PDF seized US school buses in Panama, auspiciously over

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<sup>31</sup> Powell, *My American Journey*, 387.

<sup>32</sup> Jennifer M. Taw, *Operation Just Cause: Lessons for Operations Other Than War*, MR- 569-A (Santa Monica: Rand Arroyo Center, 1996), 10; Lawrence A. Yates, "Planning: Operation Just Cause, December 1989" as found in: Robert J. Spiller, ed., *Combined Arms in Battle Since 1939* (Fort Leavenworth: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1992), 198.

<sup>33</sup> Yates, “Planning: Operation Just Cause,” 198.

<sup>34</sup> Yates, *Intervention in Panama*, 49.

<sup>35</sup> Taw, *Operation Just Cause*, 5; Yates, "Planning: Operation Just Cause," 198.

registration problems, making national news in the US. This raised concerns for the school-aged children of thousands of families stationed in Panama.<sup>36</sup>

Woerner again reshaped his approach through more deliberate planning, another [A, C] pattern, showing his disconnection with the NCA. The Panama elections were the next crisis event to reinvigorate a US political response. But General Noriega's election loss did not have the desired effect. His refusal to step down symbolized the end of political efforts to peacefully resolve the crisis. Military force appeared to be the only remaining option, but the necessary military leadership was not yet in place. General Colin Powell replaced Admiral William Crowe as CJCS in October.<sup>37</sup> Around the same time, the more aggressive General Maxwell Thurman replaced Woerner.<sup>38</sup>

The final CAP period lasted from August-December 1989. Thurman assumed command of SOUTHCOM on September 30, 1989, and immediately refocused the operation around direct combat action rather than cautious escalation. He designated XVIII ABN (soon to be designated

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<sup>36</sup> Cody R. Phillips, *Operation Just Cause: The Incursion Into Panama*, CMH 70-85-1 (Fort Leavenworth: Center of Military History, 2004), 8.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Halloran, "Bush Plans to Name Colin Powell to Head Joint Chiefs, Aides Say," *New York Times*, August 10, 1989, accessed January 8, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/08/10/us/bush-plans-to-name-colin-powell-to-head-joint-chiefs-aides-say.html>. Powell's position was known months in advance to planners and staff at SOUTHCOM.

<sup>38</sup> Richard Halloran, "U.S. Military Chief Is Replaced In the Central American Region," *New York Times*, July 21, 1989, accessed January 8, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/07/21/world/us-military-chief-is-replaced-in-the-central-american-region.html>; Ronald H. Cole, "Operation Just Cause: Panama," Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 1995), 18; GEN Woerner's change was not a normal transition after a job well done, rather, he was "eased out" by Secretary Cheney. Leaders in Washington felt Woerner was dragging his feet. After the May 1989 elections failed to oust Gen Noriega, Washington determined to reduce the number of US citizens in Panama rapidly. They reduced the embassy staff by two thirds, and gave Woerner one month to move military family members back to the United States. When Woerner asked for four months, citing the lack of 'cardboard boxes' for household goods as the limiting factor, political leaders turned against him. ADM Crowe phoned him with the news saying, "It's just political." Woerner's ouster was also known months in advance in SOUTHCOM. This change was made known to General Woerner in July 1988, after which the staff paused to see what direction the new commander would take.

Joint Task Force South, or JTFSO) as “[my] planner, my warfighter”.<sup>39</sup> This transitioned primary planning responsibility to the Corps. XVIII ABN staff, already well aware, had been working during August and produced their plan, JTFSO OPORD 90-1 in late September, just before another crisis event, another failed military coup against General Noriega. This might have been the catalyst event had the US military not been unprepared. An OPORD rewrite published on October 28 by SOUTHCOM ultimately led to JTFSO’s final OPORD 90-2 published November 3, six weeks prior to the decision to execute.

After over two years of protracted repetitions of the crisis [A], political response [B], and military planning [C] pattern, the murder of a US military officer ultimately became the catalyst for war [D]. The abortive May 1989 Panamanian elections made military action the preferred alternative in Washington. Now that the political and military pieces were in place, the President only needed the pretext. On December 17, 1989, President Bush ordered the execution of JTFSO OPORD 90-2 (Operation Just Cause) in response to the murder of a US Naval Officer by the PDF at a traffic stop the night before. With the vague termination criteria of “reestablish democracy in Panama,” US troops went on the offensive.<sup>40</sup>

## Gulf War

The road to war in the Persian Gulf was on a much more compressed timeline than in Panama. The initial crisis event was also the catalyst. On August 2, 1991, Iraq invaded Kuwait, their former province. However, the extent of the US response was still uncertain, and required political decisions and military planning. US interests in this region were, “access to Persian Gulf

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<sup>39</sup> Cole, “Operation Just Cause,” 17. Quotes from several interviews conducted by Dr. Cole paraphrasing General Thurman’s intent when he came to SOUTHCOM.

<sup>40</sup> John T. Fishel, “The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama,” Monograph, US Army War College, 1992, 55.

oil and the security of key friendly states.”<sup>41</sup> At the request of King Fahd, the United States initially intervened only to protect Saudi Arabia.

Immediately after the invasion, the United States condemned the Iraqi incursion through the United Nations. They demanded that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein withdraw all troops from Kuwait and permit all foreign diplomats to safely exit the country.<sup>42</sup> In the same resolution, the United States received an important concession from Russia, an agreement on the arms embargo.<sup>43</sup> A follow-on resolution four days later enacted further economic sanctions.<sup>44</sup> President Bush’s background as a UN ambassador no doubt heavily influenced US reliance on the UN to communicate domestic goals. Bush’s UN background was also a controlling factor in the strong push for a coalition against President Saddam Hussein.<sup>45</sup>

In parallel to the political efforts, the military reviewed plans on the shelf. On August 4, two days after Iraq invaded Kuwait, GEN Schwarzkopf, CINC CENTCOM, briefed President Bush on an existing plan known as Operation Desert Shield. Developed sometime after CENTCOM stood up in 1983, this plan called for defending Arabian Peninsula oil against a Russian incursion.<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, Schwarzkopf ordered Army Central (ARCENT) to review the defense plan in December 1989. They did so between January and June 1990, and war-gamed it

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<sup>41</sup> Bush, “NSD 26,” October 2, 1989.

<sup>42</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 660 (1990), “The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait,” August 02, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/660\(1990\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/660(1990)).

<sup>43</sup> Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 1-16.

<sup>44</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 661 (1990) “The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait,” August 06, accessed November 23, 2017 at [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/661\(1990\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/661(1990)).

<sup>45</sup> Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 10.

<sup>46</sup> GCCs create and maintain Operational Plans (OPLAN) with indefinite timelines in anticipation of something happening. When activated, these OPLANs become Operation Orders (OPORD).

in July shortly before the actual invasion.<sup>47</sup> However, Operation Desert Storm was a newly developed sequel transitioning from defense to offense. There was no offensive plan on the shelf to adjust from. Unlike Panama, where phases of the OPLAN were developed to be independent and interchangeable, the sequel to Desert Shield was planned sequentially, not simultaneously.<sup>48</sup>

Planning for Operation Desert Storm, the offensive plan to remove Iraqi troops from Kuwait by force, began formally on September 18, 1990. Schwarzkopf gave his recently arrived planners guidance, and the team spent a week on mission analysis. Lieutenant Colonel Purvis and his team of majors briefed the results one week later. The team then took eleven days to complete two courses of action, briefing Schwarzkopf on October 6<sup>th</sup>. Five days later, Purvis was in Washington, DC, briefing President Bush. Planner recommendations called for an additional corps that was not currently in theater or even aware of their future role. After nine days of civil-military dialogue, an additional corps was approved.

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, Schwarzkopf directed another course of action development session using two corps this time, which planners completed by October 21<sup>st</sup>. The OPORD brief to subordinate commanders occurred November 14<sup>th</sup>. CENTCOM's planning for Operation Desert Storm lasted about eight weeks, broken down into problem analysis (seven days), Course of Action (COA) Development (twenty-four days, broken up by the one-corps COA's (ten days), political quarrelling about it (nine days), and two-corps COA's (five days)), followed by the OPORD brief (twenty-four days). From concept to detailed plan took a total of fifty-five days.

The initial crisis event was also the catalyst for war. The unwillingness of Iraq to leave Kuwait was unacceptable to the United States and their coalition. UNSCR 678 set a deadline for execution of CENTCOM OPORD 002, and President Bush signed National Security Directive 54

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<sup>47</sup> David A. Dawson, "The Evolution of U.S. Central Command from Operational To Strategic Headquarters," Thesis, US Army War College, 2010, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Gordon R. Sullivan, Oral Interview by COL David Ellis, ed. COL John Dobrowski, (Senior Officer Oral History: US Army Military History Institute, 2002).

on January 15, 1991 informing his departments of his decision to authorize military action.<sup>49</sup> The Joint Force Commander began bombing the day after the UNSCR deadline passed.

## Haiti

The same four phases of the crisis-response pattern were evident on road to war in Haiti, first under republican President Bush and then under the democratic President Bill Clinton. The crisis started with a coup on September 30, 1991. General Raoul Cedras forced Haiti's elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to flee the country.<sup>50</sup> US political leaders first responded with sanctions through the Organization of American States (OAS). Later, and more effectively, they arranged a political agreement with Cedras with backing from the United Nations. Over three years, the military response graduated from a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) focus to peace enforcement to full Panama-style invasion. The triggering event for military action came in the form of a steady stream of Haitian refugee boats rowing towards the Florida coast in the summer of 1994. Secretary of State Warren Christopher determined that US policy had reached its "last resort."<sup>51</sup> America would uphold democracy by expelling the Haitian junta militarily.

In late 1991, under President Bush, the United States initially responded politically by cutting financial assistance to Haiti and refusing to recognize Cedras. Secretary Baker, through the OAS, enacted a "hemispheric" trade embargo of Haiti. However, Haiti was not "sufficiently

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<sup>49</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 678 (1990), "The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait," November 29, accessed November 23, 2017 at [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/678\(1990\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/678(1990)); Bush, "NSD 54," January 15, 1991.

<sup>50</sup> Walter Kretchik, Robert Baumann, and John Fishel, *Invasion, Intervention, Intervasion: A Concise History of the U.S. Army in Operation Uphold Democracy* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 1998), 27.

<sup>51</sup> Warren M. Christopher, *In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 178-179.

vital...to require using military force.”<sup>52</sup> The United States promulgated no UNSCR’s regarding Haiti in 1992. Political emphasis waned as Somalia’s humanitarian catastrophe grew and US presidential elections loomed. On his way out, President Bush ordered the Somalia mission in December 1992, passing the buck to his successor to resolve the crisis in Somalia and the growing Haiti unrest. In short, Bush’s political response towards Haiti was relatively soft.

Under Bush, the military responded with a similarly soft military planning phase. No crisis action planning immediately followed the Cedras coup. Various plans existed on the shelves of US Atlantic Command (USACOM), NORTHCOM’s predecessor, and at the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division (82 ABN), the lower echelon tactical force. Both headquarters updated deliberate plans for NEO. 82 ABN did modify the generic CONPLAN 2367 to include various NEO options, including forcible entry, but not much.<sup>53</sup>

One year later, with President Clinton now leading, political efforts increased to reinstate Aristide. In June 1993, Clinton put additional pressure on Cedras by supporting UNSCR 841. This extended Haiti’s OAS sanctions globally. Then in July, Cedras agreed to a political arrangement termed the “Governor’s Island Agreement,” trading peaceful abdication by the end of October in return for sanction removal. This set a three-month timeline for US military enforcement of the terms once they had legitimacy. The United Nations endorsed the agreement in August through UNSCR 861. Five days later, UNSCR 862 proposed implementing the agreement through a Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). When Cedras murdered the future prime

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<sup>52</sup> Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 601-602; Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney does not even mention Haiti in his memoirs, Richard B. Cheney, *In My Time* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2011), 1-532.

<sup>53</sup> Henry H. Shelton, *Without Hesitation: The Odyssey of an American Warrior* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2010), 225-226. GEN Shelton recalls that in January 1994, he “almost laughed” when he reviewed the XVIII ABN plan for Haiti. “It was the same sorry-ass three-page plan that had been on the shelf ten years prior when I was a Brigade Commander in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne.”

minister and future minister of justice in September, the agreement seemed tenuous.<sup>54</sup> UNSCR 867 then authorized the troops for “immediate dispatch...for a period of six months.”

Military CAP began in August 1993 with the parameters established by the Governors Island Agreement as a guide. Pressure mounted to have soldiers on the ground before the end of October before Aristide returned. Planning proceeded in stride with execution. USACOM first established Joint Task Force Haiti Assistance Group (JTF HAG). Ad hoc planners joined the JTF throughout August, prepared for embarkation within the month, and updated NEO and operational plans in crisis action mode. Planners developed courses of action to separate the Haitian National Police (HNP) from the military and to “professionalize” the Haitian military.<sup>55</sup> They never got the chance to try.

On October 11, another crisis occurred. Two US Navy tank landing ships (LST), the USS *Harlan County* and USS *Fairfax County*, arrived in Port-a-Prince carrying the UNMIH troops from the United States and Canada. The ships were denied berthing by a Cuban tanker, an aggressive mob chanting, “Remember Somalia,” and armed HNP patrol boats circling the harbor. Within 24 hours, the US ships turned around and returned to Puerto Rico.<sup>56</sup> Paul Meek accurately surmised the symbolism of this event, that US policymakers demonstrated “simply no political will to enforce the agreement.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> David L. Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (New York: Schribner, 2001), 270.

<sup>55</sup> Kretchik, Baumann, and Fishel, *Intervasion*, 30.

<sup>56</sup> Peter J.A. Riehm, “The USS Harlan County Affair,” *Military Review* 77, no. 4 (July-August 1997): 34. Eighteen US soldiers had been killed the week prior conducting operations in Mogadishu, Somalia.

<sup>57</sup> Paul Meek, “Why the Governors Island Accord Failed,” *Washington Post*, May 17, 1994, accessed February 16, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1994/05/17/why-the-governors-island-accord-failed/b21e86dc-b95b-43ee-a4e0-279f012c6fbf/?utm\\_term=.e8b13f0d4609](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1994/05/17/why-the-governors-island-accord-failed/b21e86dc-b95b-43ee-a4e0-279f012c6fbf/?utm_term=.e8b13f0d4609).

President Clinton was furious at his staff for putting him in a “lose-lose” situation, which looked especially bad coupled with the loss of troops in Somalia the week prior.<sup>58</sup> Scrambling for a response, the United States supported two more UNSCRs in quick succession condemning the act and authorizing member states to unambiguously “halt inward maritime shipping.”<sup>59</sup> The military response reflected the political turmoil. USACOM activated a second military element, JTF 120, on October 16 with orders to enforce the embargo of Haiti and conduct a NEO if required. At this time, JTF HAG and JTF 120 both planned operations in parallel, each from their respective ships, shifting focus from professionalizing the military and NEO to forcible entry.

Responsibility for planning changed hands numerous times before execution in September 1994. USACOM retook the lead for planning starting in November after the USS Harlan County “debacle.”<sup>60</sup> The military established a third task force, JTF 180, and assigned XVIII ABN as the lead for an invasion using “surprise, shock, and simultaneity.”<sup>61</sup> Then the NCA began to once again to favor peacekeeping, so 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division (10<sup>th</sup> MTN), as JTF 190, developed their own softer version assuming permissive entry. Then in July, a multinational contingent from Caribbean nations joined the effort, calling for further modifications.<sup>62</sup> Despite the complex chain of events, the military coalition was ready and rehearsed by May 1994.

After the USS Harlan embarrassment in October 1993, President Clinton decided to remove Cedras by military force. Like in the Gulf War, it simply took time to get the pieces

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<sup>58</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, 272. Clinton soon replaced his Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, with Admiral Perry.

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 873 (1993), “Haiti,” 13 October, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/873\(1993\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/873(1993)); United Nations Security Council, Resolution 875 (1993), “Haiti,” 16 October, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/875\(1993\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/875(1993)).

<sup>60</sup> Kretchik, Baumann, and Fishel, *Intervasion*, 35.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47. That was the direction from USACOM CINC Admiral Paul Miller.

<sup>62</sup> John T. Fishel, “Operation Uphold Democracy: Old Principles, New Realities,” *Military Review* 77, no. 4 (July-August 1997): 22.

together. Clinton replaced the Secretary of Defense, the various JTF's completed planning and preparation, and the UN Ambassador obtained legitimacy for forcible entry. The final requirement was obtaining US public support, which the refugee crisis during the summer of 1994 provided.<sup>63</sup>

## Bosnia

The road to war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (hereby abbreviated as Bosnia) in December 1995 began several years earlier. In the wake of the Soviet Union's dissolution, Yugoslavia's inflation spiked, the economy crashed, and the ethnic republics began to break away. In 1991, this triggered a civil war. The road to US involvement first went through the United Nations, whose ultimate failure to stop the genocide over the next four years led the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) taking charge. America did not hit the "turning point" and commit to NATO military force until more than 8,000 civilians were slaughtered in the UN "safe zone" of Srebrenica in July 1995.<sup>64</sup>

The United States was hesitant to get involved militarily in Bosnia. Bush's June 1991 approach was to dialogue directly with the leaders of the individual Yugoslav republic. Secretary Baker warned them of the dangers of dissolution as well as the international consequences of preventing dissolution by military force.<sup>65</sup> When that failed, the United States turned to the United Nations. Twenty-five resolutions from September 1991-December 1992 emplaced

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<sup>63</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, 270. President Clinton's campaign promise was to grant amnesty to up to 200,000 Haitians. His cabinet quickly tried to backpedal when refugees began to come. A surge of refugees on makeshift rafts floating towards the Florida coast in the summer of 1994 tested the policy, leading to the opening of Guantanamo Bay and the execution of Operation Uphold Democracy.

<sup>64</sup> William J. Perry, oral interview, conducted by Russell Riley (University of Virginia, Clinton Presidential History Project, February 21, 2006), accessed February 26, 2018, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/william-perry-oral-history-deputy-secretary-defense>.

<sup>65</sup> Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 478-484.

weapons embargos on all parties, sanctioned Serbia and Croatia and all territories taken by violence, documented war crimes, and authorized international troops.

The United States felt bound by the complex situation. Britain and France, two of the US's closest allies, historically sided with the Serbians, while America saw the Croats and Muslims as the victims. As President Bush left office in early 1993, Powell remarked in hindsight that the outgoing administration had been "frustrated by not knowing what we should do or could do to end the killing."<sup>66</sup> Baker offered a more direct explanation of US inaction in Yugoslavia during 1991-1992. European allies "wanted the lead," Americans "would never have supported it," and the United States' "vital interests were not at stake."<sup>67</sup> UNSCR 743 authorized a UN Protective Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia in February 1992, and UNSCR 758 increased the UNPROFOR "mandate and strength" to include Sarajevo, Bosnia.<sup>68</sup> US troops were not deployed to either location, and it appeared that European allies were indeed leading sufficiently.

Militarily, the United States remained wary but only marginally committed through NATO.<sup>69</sup> Naval forces monitored sanction compliance in the Adriatic Sea. During the long siege of Sarajevo, NATO planes under Operation Provide Promise (1992) airlifted humanitarian assistance. UNSCR 781 banned all military flights in response to Serbian bombing, which NATO observed using aircraft through Operation Sky Monitor (1992). Deliberate plans to relieve or

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<sup>66</sup> Powell, *My American Journey*, 567.

<sup>67</sup> Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 635-636.

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 743 (1992), "Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia," 21 February, accessed November 23, 2017 at [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/743\(1992\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/743(1992)); United Nations Security Council, Resolution 758 (1992), "Bosnia and Herzegovina," 8 June, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/758\(1992\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/758(1992)).

<sup>69</sup> Powell, *My American Journey*, 291-292. Bush was very influenced by Powell, who inflated the number of troops required to respond to Bosnia to around 200,000. He felt that the lack of a "clear answer to the question of why" American troops needed to be in Bosnia was reason to stay away. "To provide a 'presence' or 'symbol' is not good enough."

rescue the UNPROFOR on the ground were created by Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH), a NATO subordinate.<sup>70</sup>

President Clinton promised aggressive action in Bosnia during his 1992 Presidential campaign. His initial policy in 1993 became known as the ‘lift and strike’ plan—allow the Muslim Bosnians to arm themselves by lifting the arms embargo while NATO airplanes bombed Serbian positions around Sarajevo. In May 1993, Secretary of State Warren Christopher presented the policy to a “skeptical” audience in Europe, failing to unite the allies to the new US approach. Another twenty-six UNSCRs followed in 1993 establishing “safe areas,” tightening sanction enforcement, and establishing a tribunal to investigate war crimes. Empty language such as, the Security Council will “keep open other options for new and tougher measures,” showed Serbia how impotent the UN was.<sup>71</sup> 1994 featured another twelve resolutions full of condemnation and empty threats. In 1995 another twenty-two UNSCRs were passed until peace talks were signed in Dayton, Ohio on December 15, 1995. Only then did the US commit politically to sending significant ground forces.

Under President Clinton, rhetoric about doing more did not change the national policy, which, according to UNSCRs, was still nonintervention and letting Europe lead. In hindsight, Secretary of Defense William Perry stated that, “nobody was focused on [Bosnia] the first year” because Haiti and Somalia were “sucking up all the oxygen.”<sup>72</sup> In 1993, the military enforced UNSCR sanctions. Operation Deny Flight (1993) tightened the no-fly zone, and Operation Sharp Guard (1993) more closely watched movements in the Adriatic Sea. Approval for UNPROFOR protection using NATO airstrikes required both NATO and UN signatures, which was the

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<sup>70</sup> This was built to support the Vance-Owen Peace Plan to partition Bosnia into zones, and was never implemented.

<sup>71</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 836 (1993), Resolution 836, “Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 4 June, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/836\(1993\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/836(1993)).

<sup>72</sup> ADM Perry, Oral Interview.

equivalent of disallowing them.<sup>73</sup> In 1994, very little changed. The sting of Somalia “absolutely foreclosed the possibility of sending any troops to Rwanda” and the administration distanced themselves from Rwanda and Bosnia for the time being. When the military attempted to utilize NATO airstrikes in May, UNPROFOR members were taken hostage, effectively deterring further use of airstrikes.

The US military did not conduct CAP until peacemaking deals showed promise starting in November 1995. The JCS sent an Alert Order to US European Command (EUCOM) on November 2, 1995, nineteen days before the Dayton Accords were signed. EUCOM pushed an order to their subordinate component command, US Army Europe (USAEUR), within twelve days, who set up a Crisis Action Team (CAT) on November 22, the day after the peace agreement was signed. President Clinton received a NATO brief on December 2. Then, NATO approved and ordered the execution of OPLAN 40105, which became known as Operation Joint Endeavor, on December 4.<sup>74</sup> UNSCR 1031 passed on December 15, the day after the Paris agreements were signed, authorizing a NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) to replace the UNPROFOR on December 20.

## Landmarks

Military men look for three surefire clues that an enemy force is preparing to attack. Is it moving its artillery forward? Is it laying down communications? Is it reinforcing its forces logistically, with stocks of fuel and ammunition? By July 31, [1990,] all three conditions were present in southern Iraq.

—Colin Powell, *My American Journey*

The US military uses many intelligence collection tools to make assumptions about enemy actions. But what tools does it use to anticipate its own government’s actions in a crisis

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<sup>73</sup> UNSCR 836, “Bosnia and Herzegovina,” June, 4, 1993.

<sup>74</sup> Barbara Bormolini, Robert Klemmer, and Norm Trier, “Analytical Support to Operation Joint Endeavor,” Operations Research/Systems Analysis Cell, Headquarters US Army Europe, April 1996, A-3-A-5.

situation? Understanding domestic intentions is equally as important as understanding enemy intentions. Within the pattern of escalation on the road to war, strong signals of domestic intent are called landmarks. Military planners should observe landmarks closely. Landmarks ideally rise above the noise of today's hyper-information environment and clarify real policy. Three landmarks in particular, treaties, agreements, UNSCRs, and national elections, are strong indicators of national intent.

If recognized and interpreted correctly, landmarks enable planners to more accurately align the military problem to the national context. Problems are easier to solve when they are well understood. Otherwise, planners must make assumptions "when there is insufficient information or guidance."<sup>75</sup> Assumptions address "strategic or operational gaps." The faster that military echelons can align to national aims, the better they can harmonize efforts with the NCA. Such details also help anticipate and prepare for crisis, lessening the amount of plan modifications required at the last minute.

Speeches from NCA figures are not reliable landmarks. Too many speeches from compelling figures argued both sides of intervention and nonintervention leading up to Panama, the Gulf War, Haiti, and Bosnia. For instance, President Bush informed congress that "...the military's forced exile of President Aristide continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States."<sup>76</sup> Yet this was a ploy to obtain funding for non-military actions. Which speeches are the most important? Should military plans change with every headline, Tweet, or campaign promise from a NCA? Is the President's speech to the Senate Armed Services Committee a finalized intent, or is the speech just testing to see whether congress will underwrite a course of action? Benign statements by

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<sup>75</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, IV-15.

<sup>76</sup> George H. W. Bush, "Message from the President of the United States, Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to Haiti," US 102d Congress, 2d Session, House Document 102-400 (Washington, DC: GPO, September 30, 1992) 1.

President Anwar Sadat, made two weeks prior to Egypt's assault across the Suez Canal during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, clearly demonstrate that speeches, closely monitored by foreign governments, are often deceptions.<sup>77</sup> Two-level games come to mind.<sup>78</sup>

A political speech is like a balloon—an idea floated up to test which way support winds are blowing. Real national intentions are not easily discernable from rhetoric. General Jack Galvin, CINC EUCOM from 1987-1992, praised CJCS Powell for his, “feel for what is real in Washington and what [exists] only on the surface.”<sup>79</sup> In other words, Powell could accurately identify landmarks for subordinate commanders that clarified national intent. The following landmarks are accurate and finite signals of national intent.

The wording contained in certain UN resolutions clearly signals domestic intentions. Whether the United States seeks to act militarily, unilaterally, or otherwise is telegraphed vaguely or overtly in the language of resolutions. Often, deadlines or ultimatums are issued demanding political action, and escalation may follow. These demands are the political version of initiative.<sup>80</sup> Major decisions rest on these timelines that can set the course for future conflict anchored to those dates. The sheer number of resolutions over a given time period signals resolve, but may

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<sup>77</sup> Abraham Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War* (New York: Schocken Books, 2017), 66. President Sadat's speech on September 28, 1973 lulled high-level intelligence officials in Israel to believe that an attack from Egypt was not imminent simply because of what the speech did *not* say. “He talked about trees and stones, everything but war.”

<sup>78</sup> Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988), 427-460. Putnam's paper is about the art of negotiations, both with the opposite side and with their own side. Negotiators must negotiate with their constituents to understand what their constituents are prepared to authorize in any possible deal. A public speech is like a negotiation, where the listening audience includes both internal constituents and external parties. The speech is intended to convince both audiences that the speaker's actions are acceptable.

<sup>79</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, 39.

<sup>80</sup> US Department of Defense, US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-02, *Terms and Military Symbols* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 1-70. Initiative is “setting or dictating the terms of action throughout an operation.”

also signal the lack of international consensus, depending on the context. The content in UN resolutions also tend to define the termination criteria politicians establish for military action.<sup>81</sup>

Politicians define objectives and military planning timelines through UN resolutions. Planners should anchor timing assumptions to these binding international statements, especially when they contain dates. If major international incidents are followed in short order by a UN resolution, anticipate a planning surge lasting from one to six weeks. After that, without a date to anchor on, planning returns to routine actions with only periodic check-ups from the NCA.

National elections also signal intentions. Internationally, it tends to signal a pause in secondary foreign policy actions. Domestically, a new president often leads to a new Secretary of Defense, a new CJCS, and in some cases, a new GCC in a certain area. The new NCA team may be more or less aggressive, more or less likely to use military force, or more or less inclined to focus on the same problem set as their predecessor. Written policy from the NCA, such as the National Security Strategy, is a guide to policy intentions though not to the level of a landmark. In the hierarchy of political statements, international documents are most controlling, then written policy, then what is said in speeches or ‘Tweets’. This helps isolate the signal from the noise.

Treaties and international agreements also document both political objectives and important timelines. Expiration dates, transition dates, and conditions to be met at those times are all relevant aspects. Treaties may be bi-lateral or multi-lateral. Treaties like the North Atlantic Treaty and the United Nations Charter represent a binding international agreement. Bilateral treaties such as the Panama Canal Treaty include important details that clarify the national policy in the future. Other international agreements don’t reach the level of treaty but carry similar weight, like the agreement between the US and Iran over Iran’s nuclear program in 2013. Military actions that seek to ignore or bypass treaties or agreements will ultimately stall, so early awareness of political roadblocks is vital to planning.

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<sup>81</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, xxii. Termination criteria “describe the conditions that must exist...at the cessation of military operations.” They are the political objectives.

Although difficult, properly identifying landmarks, clarifies priorities to those who must apply limited planning resources to numerous problems. This section elaborates on the landmarks influential to operations in Panama, the Gulf War, Haiti, and Bosnia. Each case study also has road-to-war timeline illustrating the pattern and relevant landmarks.

## Panama

President Jimmy Carter created a high potential for war with Panama through two bilateral treaties ratified in 1977. President Carter and Panamanian President Omar Torrijos formalized the dates for transfer of control and ownership of the Panama Canal to Panama on January 1, 1990. If something was going to happen between the United States and Panama, it would happen in the time period leading up to this date.

The history and strategic importance of the Panama Canal made transfer a divisive geostrategic decision.<sup>82</sup> When a presidential candidate Ronald Reagan, voiced popular opposition in 1976 when he called the Canal Zone “sovereign United States Territory every bit the same as Alaska... We bought it, we paid for it, we built it, and we intend to keep it.”<sup>83</sup> However, four years later, when he was in the White House, he favored a softer diplomatic policy.

However, more aggressive leaders came to power in both Panama and the United States. Elected in 1983, Panamanian President Manuel Noriega used the Canal to defy the United States and to quash his opposition in order to maintain power. His increasingly brutal regime alienated

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<sup>82</sup> Jakub J. Grygiel, *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), xiii. The Panama Canal is a geopolitical advantage and source of power for Panama, as it was for the United States before transfer; Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World: Release 2.0* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), XX, Zakaria cites a statistic that the straits of Malacca are fifteen times busier than the Panama Canal and five times busier than the Suez Canal. There is no Western treaty timeline for ownership of the Malacca Straits. It is part of the littoral coasts of Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia. For the Panama Canal and Suez Canal, treaties set timetables for war.

<sup>83</sup> Ronald Reagan, “To Restore America,” Televised Campaign Address, March 31, 1976, accessed November 22, 2017, [http://reagan2020.us/speeches/To\\_Restore\\_America.asp](http://reagan2020.us/speeches/To_Restore_America.asp).

some, who publicly exposed his other nefarious actions, including his international drug trafficking,

Eager to maintain long-term unencumbered use of the Canal, the United States initially trod lightly. President Reagan's softer approach of diplomacy, judicial pressure, economic sanctions, and public disparagement of President Noriega from 1987-1989 gave way to President George H. W. Bush's more aggressive tone during the final year leading up to the Canal transfer, including threatened military intervention using the 14,000 US troops stationed in Panama. The violence crescendo led to an undeclared but palpable "state of war" between Panama and the United States.<sup>84</sup> It peaked with a full-scale US military intervention to capture Noriega on December 20, 1989, less than two weeks before Panama was scheduled to take control of the Canal for the first time in their history.

Military planners didn't see the treaties as landmarks and thus were surprised by the escalation in tension. Until March 5, 1988, deliberate contingency plans only included defense of the Canal from a third party, not from the host-nation's PDF. Military CAP took place initially at the end of February, 1988, transitioning to deliberate planning efforts over the next twenty-one months. Urgency fluctuated based on current events and leadership changes, never fully coalescing into a fully developed plan. During the first twenty-four hours of execution, the law-and-order power vacuum created in Panama City without PDF support was exposed. So was the gap between combat and post-combat operations. The SOUTHCOM J5 himself became the Commander of the Civil Military Operations Task Force (COMCMOTF) during Operation Promote Liberty because no commander with troops had been assigned responsibility.<sup>85</sup> Despite

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<sup>84</sup> Cole, "Operation Just Cause," 33. Quote by President Noriega as remembered by General Thurman on December 15, 1989, the day before PDF soldiers shot and killed a US serviceman at a traffic stop.

<sup>85</sup> John T. Fishel, "The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama," Monograph, US Army War College, 1992, 27.

ample time and numerous symptoms, planners were unprepared for turbulence in the years leading to the transfer.<sup>86</sup>

The strong possibility of an aggressive Panamanian leader leveraging the Panama Canal for his own benefit could have been surmised from history. The similarities between this and the Suez Canal crisis of 1952 are striking. The large British garrison in Egypt, the treaty with a deadline for 1956, the rhetoric between President Nasser and Prime Minister Eden, and the escalating hostilities leading up to that deadline all have 1980's parallels in Panama. The deduction is that treaties with deadlines can create a red zone, a planning landmark, with implications should not be overlooked. These dates create decision points for both treaty parties.

Other dated international agreements, including UNSCRs, represent additional planning landmarks that can raise the probability of war. The United States publicly communicates its intentions through these resolutions. However, prior to the invasion of Panama, there was no such UNSCR. Instead, the US worked around the UN, taking economic action through the western hemisphere equivalent, the OAS.<sup>87</sup> There was no military coalition in Panama because the United States failed to pass a resolution justifying military action. In fact, the United States vetoed a UN resolution condemning their own violation of Panamanian sovereignty.<sup>88</sup> Yet in many other conflicts, UN resolutions were strong indicators of the military timeline. Figure 2 summarizes the patterns and landmarks on the road to Panama.

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<sup>86</sup> Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 704. In his memoirs, Pres Reagan said he agreed “wholeheartedly” with Bush’s intervention.

<sup>87</sup> At the present time, the Organization of American States includes all 35 sovereign nations in the Western Hemisphere. Venezuela announced in 2017 its intentions to pull out, and Cuba has not been a participating member since 1962.

<sup>88</sup> Paul Lewis, “Fighting in Panama: United Nations Security Council Condemnation of Invasion Vetoed,” *New York Times*, December 24, 1989, accessed September 23, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/24/world/fighting-panama-united-nations-security-council-condemnation-invasion-vetoed.html>.

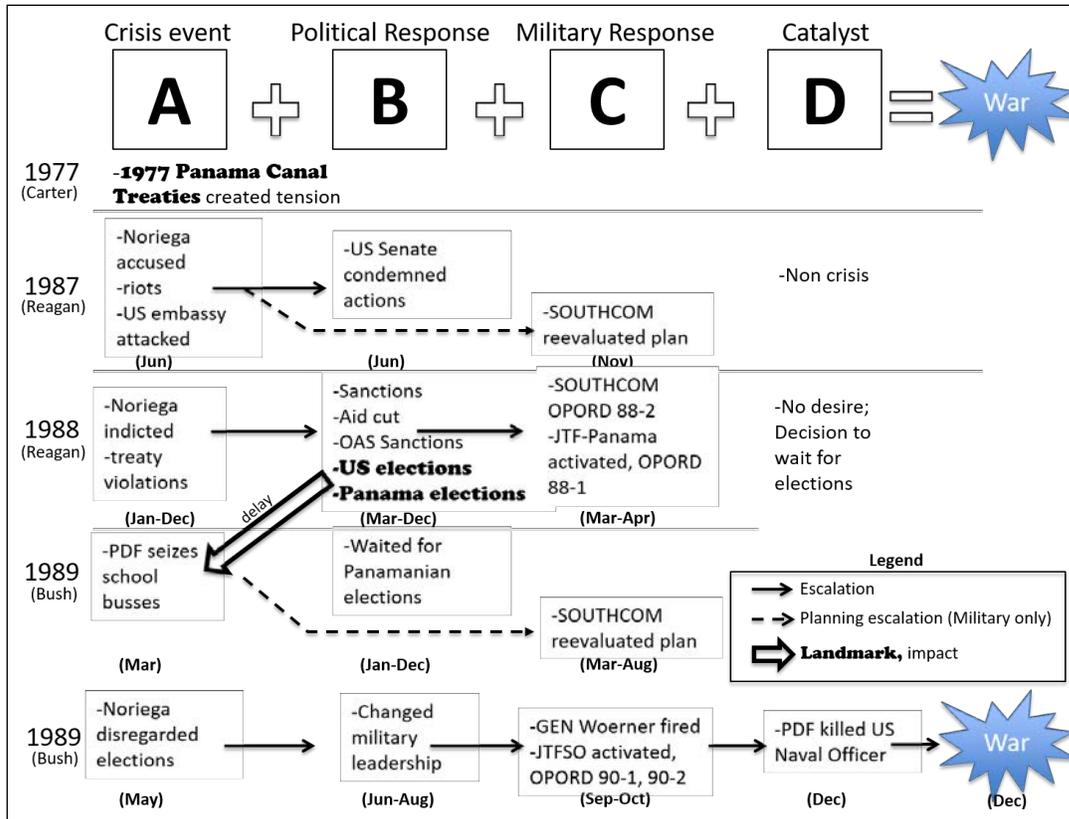


Figure 2. Road to War in Panama, 1977-1989. Created by author.

The repetitive nature of the pattern is clear, and the duration from initial crisis to trigger can be prolonged. Dotted lines indicate instances where military planning went beyond political guidance. When this is done, the military risks misalignment with political will while at the same time risking unpreparedness for an unanticipated catalyst triggering war. US and Panamanian presidential elections were two landmarks signaling a low probability for war from April 1988 to May 1989. The other landmark was the 1978 treaty transitioning control of the Panama Canal. This created a swelling tension, ultimately bursting just before the 1990 deadline.

## Gulf War

On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. On that same day, the United Nations passed resolution 660 condemning the invasion and demanding Iraq's withdrawal.<sup>89</sup> On August 6, another resolution called for economic sanctions and refusal to "recognize any regime set up by the occupying power."<sup>90</sup> Other resolutions tightened sanctions, demanded the release of foreign nationals, allowed humanitarian assistance, and prepared the way for a UN team to enter Kuwait. The UN passed twelve resolutions between August 2 and November 29, the last of which contained a deadline. UNSCR 678 authorized member states "all necessary means" to uphold UNSCR 660 after January 15, 1991, roughly six weeks away.<sup>91</sup> The coalition air campaign began on January 17, two days after the deadline.

Secretary Baker had an offensive military plan in hand when he went to the UN at the end of October. Explaining the wisdom of UN resolutions, Baker stated, "almost by definition, the first stop for coalition building [is] the United Nations."<sup>92</sup> President Bush determined that a coalition was a prerequisite for offensive military action. Deciding in late October, he tasked Baker to make it happen. Bound by the diplomatic timetable of the rotating chairmanship of the Security Council, the United States would lose their opportunity for an international mandate at the end of November when the United States relinquished the chair to Yemen on December 1. Yemen, Iraq's ally and "unalterably opposed to the coalition," had voted against every previous resolution and would surely stymie future attempts.<sup>93</sup> Military planners should closely consider

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<sup>89</sup> UNSCR 660, "The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait," August 2, 1990.

<sup>90</sup> UNSCR 661, "The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait," August 06, 1990.

<sup>91</sup> UNSCR 678, "The Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait," November 29, 1990.

<sup>92</sup> Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 278.

<sup>93</sup> Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 304.

UNSCRs when developing potential timelines; resolutions tend to be much more firm than the ebb and flow of current events and their grandiloquence.

Paralleling the political efforts, the military planning response was uneven across the services. Initial plans ‘on the shelf’ at CENTCOM called for defense of the Arabian Peninsula, though with Russian aggressors in mind.<sup>94</sup> However, thoughts of offensive operations to liberate Kuwait began immediately. CJCS Powell estimated that it would take “about two months...to assess the impact of sanctions” passed on August 6. Powell advised President Bush on September 24 that a “full-scale air, land, and sea campaign” would be ready by January, 1991.<sup>95</sup> At that point, army planners were just completing mission analysis at the end of their first week in country.<sup>96</sup> COL John Warden and the Air Force, on the other hand, had already briefed Powell their “bold, imaginative, and solid” plan back in August. Perhaps this disparity explains both President Bush’s and Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia’s confidence in the air capabilities—the Air Force was the fastest to present desirable military options.<sup>97</sup>

Military planners for the offensive Operation Desert Storm enabled the UNSCR deadline. CAP for an offensive into Kuwait began officially on September 18, 1990, when General Norman Schwarzkopf provided initial guidance to his recently arrived team of planners. By October 21, GEN Schwarzkopf accepted their course of action calling for a two-corps attack. By the end of the month, they completed OPORD 002. In the month leading up to the ultimatum, Schwarzkopf briefed his subordinate commanders, coordinated coalition support, and issued orders to deploy the still-unaware VII Corps. He received their back brief on the OPORD during the same week UNR 678 passed. The US government was likely waiting on this plan, with its associated

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<sup>94</sup> Richard M. Swain, *Lucky War: Third Army in Desert Storm* (Fort Leavenworth: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 4.

<sup>95</sup> Powell, *My American Journey*, 470, 479.

<sup>96</sup> Swain, *Lucky War*, 78.

<sup>97</sup> Powell, *My American Journey*, 476-478.

timeline, to be ready before pressing the deadline on Iraq. Figure 3 summarizes the patterns and landmarks on the road to the Gulf War.

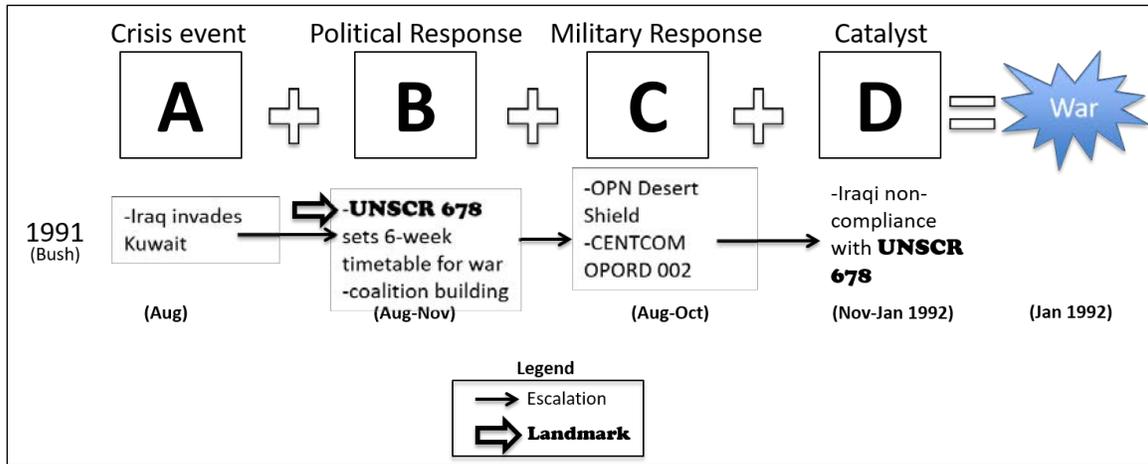


Figure 3. Road to War in Iraq (Gulf War), 1991-1992. Created by author.

The timeline was much more compressed in the Gulf War. The plan for Operation Desert Storm was already on the shelf, and the plan for Operation Desert Storm took only six weeks to develop. Different from the other case studies in Panama, Haiti, or Bosnia, this war was “all about oil, nuclear weapons, and aggression.”<sup>98</sup> US security, including energy security, was a primary interest. The UNSCR 678 was a very clear landmark with both termination criteria and a timeline. Not every UNSCR is so clear.

## Haiti

The first landmark regarding whether military action would occur in Haiti was Bush’s election loss to Clinton in 1992. Militarily, that event made Haiti military action a non-starter that year, and military plans accordingly changed very little. The second landmark for Haiti was the passage of UNSCR 841 in June of 1993. Post-election, it was the first time President Clinton made an international declaration linking Haiti with US interests. It also declared exactly what the

<sup>98</sup> Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1991), 345.

United States wanted—“to reinstate the legitimate Government of President Jean Bertrand Aristide.”<sup>99</sup>

UN resolutions were the dominant landmarks on the road to Haiti. Of the six in 1993, UNSCR 867 provided the most information for military planners. The strategic goal was “a restoration of democracy.” Operationally, this meant “creating a new police force and... modernizing the Haitian armed forces.”<sup>100</sup> These political objectives set the foundation for military plans for JTF HAG. The strategic and operational goals were spelled out almost a month prior in UNSCR 862, though posed as a recommendation that was yet to be approved.<sup>101</sup>

The OAS (later adopted by the UN) Governor’s Island Agreement was also a landmark. It set a timetable for Cedras to vacate by the end of October 1993 along with several other military leaders. It named President Aristide as his successor and named several other government officials that would assume duties in the interim. Importantly, the agreement also allowed foreign troops in Haiti to ensure a peaceful transition. UNSCR 867 interpreted this as over 1200 troops, and later negotiations determined those troops would specifically include observers, engineers from the US Navy and Canadian Air Force as well as police from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.<sup>102</sup> This established the assets available for the military.

The final landmarks came in the form of three UNSCRs. In May, June, and July 1994, UNSCRs 917, 933, and 940 respectively laid out termination criteria, White House intentions to

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<sup>99</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 841 (1993), “Haiti,” June 16, accessed February 28, 2018, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/841\(1993\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/841(1993)).

<sup>100</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 867 (1993), “Haiti,” September 23, accessed February 28, 2018, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/867\(1993\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/867(1993)).

<sup>101</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 862 (1993), “Haiti,” August 31, accessed February 28, 2018, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/862\(1993\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/862(1993)).

<sup>102</sup> Riehm, “The USS Harlan County Affair,” 32; UNSCR 867, “Haiti,” September 23, 1993.

strengthen the UNMIH “mandate,” and achieved authorization to use “all necessary means.”<sup>103</sup>

This signaled to XVIII ABN, 10<sup>th</sup> MTN, and other echelons that the mission was imminent by the end of July. Six weeks later on September 19, 1994, thousands of airborne troopers were enroute to their objectives in Haiti.

There are times when the United States does not communicate its plans publicly through the United Nations. Panama was a good example. President Clinton, in considering options for Haiti and after several unsuccessful attempts to gain UN support for action, told his cabinet of his intention to initiate military action even if the UN failed to approve military action:

Circumstances have arisen and will arise in the future in which it will be in our interest to proceed in partnership with others to preserve, maintain or restore the peace. The United Nations (UN) can be an important instrument of such partnerships. Participation in UN peace operations can never substitute for the necessity of fighting and winning our own wars, nor can we allow it to reduce our capability to meet that imperative. It can, however, serve, in effect, as a "force multiplier" in our efforts to promote peace and stability.<sup>104</sup>

The implication is that while seeking support through the UN is an option, it is not our only option. Planners will not always have clear UN signals about upcoming operations and will have to rely on other landmarks. Figure 4 summarizes the patterns and landmarks on the road to Haiti.

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<sup>103</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 917 (1994), “Haiti,” 06 May, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/917\(1994\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/917(1994)); United Nations Security Council, Resolution 933 (1994), “Haiti,” 30 June, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/933\(1994\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/933(1994)); United Nations Security Council, Resolution 940 (1994), “Haiti,” 31 July, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/940\(1994\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/940(1994)).

<sup>104</sup> William J. Clinton, “Presidential Decision Directive/National Security Council 25, Subject: US Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations,” Clinton Digital Library, May 3, 1994, accessed March 14, 2018, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12749>. This directive was circulated three days before the first of three successful UN resolutions was approved.

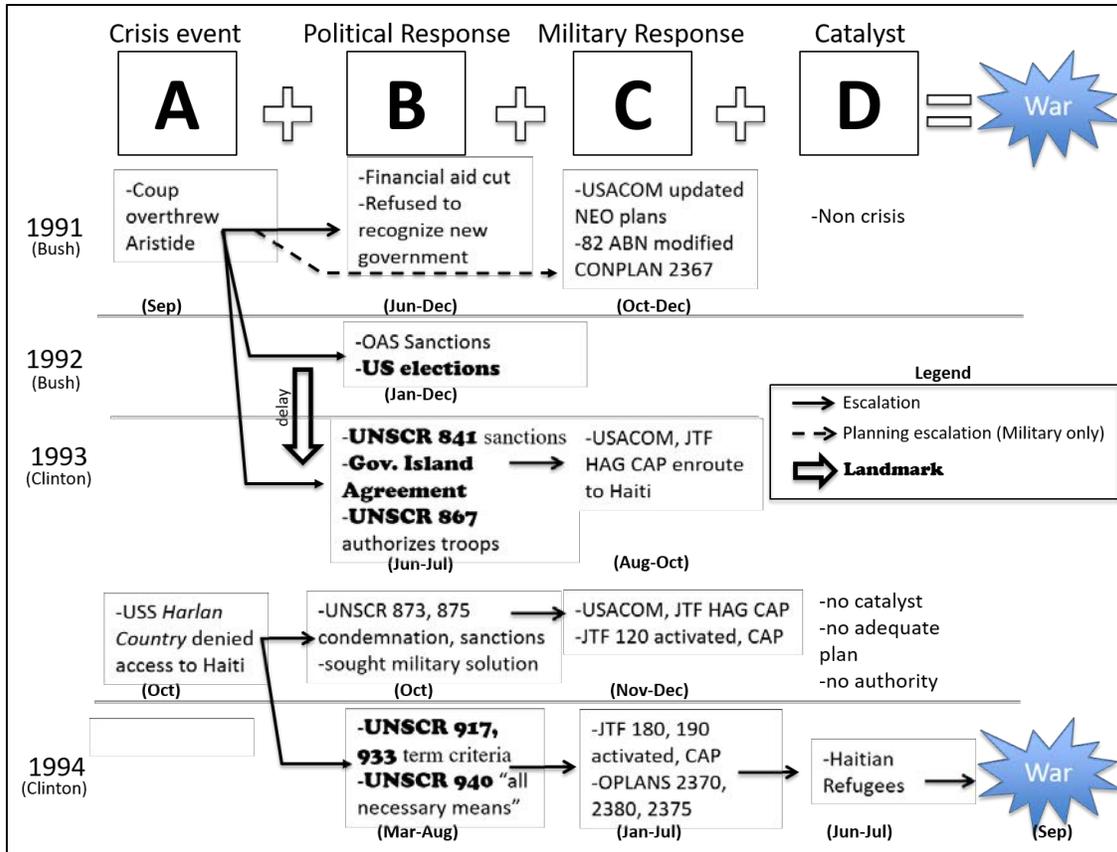


Figure 4. Road to War in Haiti, 1991-1994. Created by author.

The road to war in Haiti was a major commitment of troops for a secondary interest. This partially explains the protracted timeline. As in Panama, there was also a delay due to elections. The UN landmarks were pieced together from two groups of resolutions. The 1993 resolutions were passed under seemingly cooperative circumstances with the Cedras junta, while the 1994 resolutions were passed after the US resolved to use military force. Both sets provided a timeline and termination criteria, but the 1993 circumstances did not produce an adequate military plan, did not have the requisite authority to address a post-USS *Harlan County* situation. The US also lacked a clear catalyst, as national embarrassment is simply not enough of an immediate trigger.

## Bosnia

Two landmarks in Bosnia rose above the noise and indicated clear national intentions. The first, like in Panama and Somalia, was the distraction of the US presidential election. In August 1992, Baker left office to assist in President Bush's reelection campaign, a clear manifestation of disinterest in external efforts.<sup>105</sup> President Bush's limited involvement in Bosnia in 1992 was due in no small part to the bad press he received during the campaign about his "preoccupation with foreign policy."<sup>106</sup> The signal from Washington in 1992 was that due to election pressures, the politicians were too busy to deal with minor threats such as Bosnia.

One could argue that in Bosnia, UN resolutions failed to clarify national intent until the very end of 1995. The sheer number of resolutions diluted the intelligibility and impact of their message. Indeed, there were over eighty resolutions between 1991-1995 regarding former Yugoslavian states. Also, the guidance to UNPROFOR soldiers in the UNSCRs contained a lot of vague language, such as the inadequate initial mandate to "create conditions of peace."<sup>107</sup> There were also conflicting rules of engagement and unclear chains of command for the multinational force.

Interestingly and counter-intuitively, the metadata of vague UNSCRs does signal two clear messages about national intent. First, the NSC, before committing large-scale ground forces, tries to get clear UNSCR language granting international legitimacy to fight the American way. Second, when language is ambiguous, US deployment is not imminent, unless the President makes it clear the US is going in alone. President Clinton tried unsuccessfully many times to

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<sup>105</sup> Valerie Lofland, "Somalia: US Intervention and Operation Restore Hope," *Case Studies in Policy-Making and Implementation* 6 (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1992), 55; Baker, *Politics of Diplomacy*, 1-672. Another example of the blindness to external matters late in Bush's term is from Secretary Baker's memoirs. He mentions Somalia just once in his 672-page book: the evacuation of the US embassy in January 1991.

<sup>106</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, 58.

<sup>107</sup> UNSCR 743, "Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia," February 21, 1992.

elevate the use of NATO air strikes against Serbian forces, but was unable to convince European allies, UNPROFOR commanders, or the Secretary General to allow it.<sup>108</sup> Without international legitimacy or autonomy to fight the American way, the US does not fight wars without undisputed national interests. UN resolutions with the magic words “all necessary means” and “the rules and procedures...[will] be established by the Commander of IFOR,” are the clear UNSCR landmarks.<sup>109</sup> That is why US troops did not deploy in force until the United Nations both authorized the force and ceded command authority to NATO commanders.

The most relevant treaty in the Bosnia war was the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949, which was the charter for NATO. In the case of Bosnia, one specific landmark was UNSCR 734, February 1992, which by authorizing a UN force, was subordinating NATO participation to the will of the UN.<sup>110</sup> This led to the complicated “dual key nonsense” of UNSCR 836 requiring approval from three figures before a NATO plane could support the UNPROFOR in their protection mission.<sup>111</sup> Finally, four years later, UNSCR 1031, passed February 1995 described the critical “transfer of authority from UNPROFOR” to IFOR, an entity created from NATO and non-NATO allies, to include Russia, under an American-led force.<sup>112</sup>

Until early November 1995, when CAP began under the US Army V Corps staff, national intent was unclear and plans varied widely for how US forces might complement the

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<sup>108</sup> Sydney S. Blumenthal, *The Clinton Wars* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003), 62; Christopher, *In the Stream of History*, 345-349; Madeleine J.K. Albright, *Madame Secretary* (New York: Miramax Books, 2003), 185-186.

<sup>109</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1031 (1995), “Bosnia and Herzegovina and Multinational Implementation Force (IFOR),” 15 December, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1031\(1995\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1031(1995)).

<sup>110</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 734 (1992), “Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,” February 21, accessed November 23, 2017, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/734\(1992\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/734(1992)).

<sup>111</sup> Madeleine J.K. Albright, *Madame Secretary* (New York: Miramax Books, 2003), 187; UNSCR 836, “Bosnia and Herzegovina,” June, 4, 1993.

<sup>112</sup> UNSCR 1031, “Bosnia and Herzegovina and Multinational Implementation Force (IFOR),” December 15, 1995.

UNPROFOR. NATO's AFSOUTH plan, including the already approved OPLAN 40104. This was a plan for an "extremely different mission" forcing the US military to create a "different troop structure" and a "1-year duration as opposed to a 90-day duration."<sup>113</sup> However, while waiting for the completion of the political peace agreements to trigger action, OPLAN 40104 included the anticipated change in authority. The US would fight its own way with allies.

Speeches, unlike treaties, presidential elections and United Nations resolutions, are unclear landmarks of national command authority (NCA) intentions. Language hinting at the approval of force, a sequence of escalations, and deadlines should tell planners at every echelon involved when to prepare in earnest. Figure 5 summarizes patterns and landmarks on the road to Bosnia.

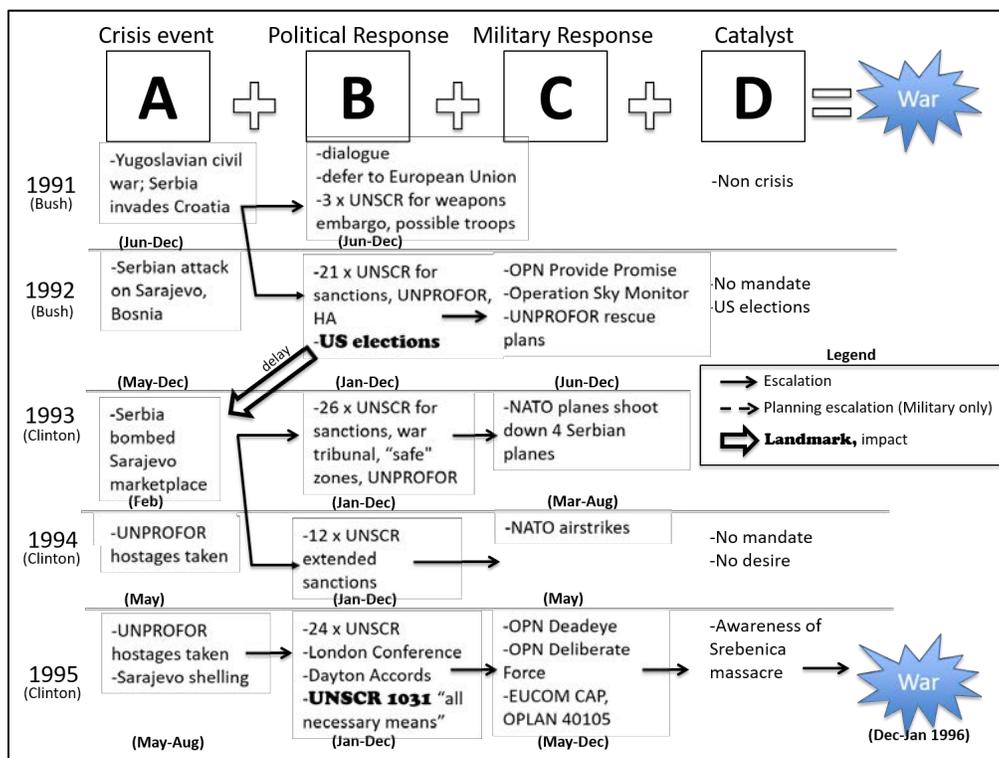


Figure 5. Road to War in Bosnia, 1991-1996. Created by author.

<sup>113</sup> Peter J. Schifferle, oral interview from *Operation Joint Endeavor: V Corps in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1995-1996* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 2010), 182-186. This Corps Planner describes the tenuous situation US forces were in planning in anticipation of UNSCR 1031. It was a "rapidly changing, rapidly emerging scenario, with multiple chains of command issuing guidance...it was indeed crisis action planning, without having the crisis action system activated."

Bosnia also showed a protracted crisis-response pattern indicative of a secondary interest war. US elections delayed any potential military response in 1992. The minor air and sea NATO operations in support of the UNPROFOR did not constitute a major commitment. Although the absence of any other clear landmarks demonstrated both a lack of US commitment and a lack of international consensus, it did evidence a strong desire for better circumstances. For the United States, Srebrenica was the catalyst that unified public opinion both domestically and internationally.

## Conclusion

Military planners can better align their military operations with the national intent by using the crisis-response pattern and relevant landmarks to interpret what the military will be asked to do, and by when. During the crisis situations on the roar to war in Panama, the Gulf War, Haiti, and Bosnia, policy was in flux making military alignment with policy difficult. While the NCA orients to the ill-defined situation and clarifies their proposed response, planners can use patterns and landmarks to fill in the blanks and press forward, anticipating what military objectives and timelines will be.

The crisis-response pattern provides the following useful extracts about how the United States goes to war in non-existential situations. First, war over secondary interests (like in Panama, Haiti, and Bosnia) is unlikely during Presidential election years. Second, war must be a last resort, only decided upon when Panamanian elections failed, when Saddam stubbornly held Kuwait past the deadline, when Aristide refused the USS *Harlan County* at Port-au-Prince, and when the UNPROFOR failed in Srebrenica. Third, there must be a cohesive political team, down to the Geographic Combatant Commander. Panama operations had to wait for Thurman to replace Woerner; Bosnia and Haiti operations had to wait until Perry replaced Aspin. Fourth, the United States (particularly since Panama) strives for international legitimacy before undertaking large-

scale military action, evident by UN resolutions authorizing Iraq, Haiti, and Bosnia.<sup>114</sup> Fifth, there must be a politically aligned military plan. Military plans were not ready when Noriega disregarded election results, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, when Cedras rejected USS *Harlan County* berth at Port-a-Prince, or when Serbs slaughtered 8,000 civilians in Srebrenica. When a crisis event occurs, there will be a political response and possibly a military response. If all prerequisites are met and a catalyst event occurs, war is imminent.

Regarding landmarks, the most evident signal of future US military actions are found in UN resolutions, national elections, treaties and other agreements. Not every resolution, treaty, or agreement is a landmark, and there may be other landmarks, such as some speeches, that do not fall under these three categories. Existential situations, such as President Roosevelt's declaration of war on December 8, 1941, are of such magnitude that they bypass landmarks and patterns altogether. Yet for the last thirty years, landmarks have revealed national intent about what the military will be asked to do and when. These sources are unclassified and accessible to every echelon seeking clarity amongst the cacophony of modern media. Very few planners have direct lines to a NCA or receives direct guidance. Identification of landmarks help every planner align military objectives with national intent more rapidly. In a crisis situation, time is the most precious resource.<sup>115</sup>

Today, planners watching the non-existential situation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States under President Trump might ask whether the

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<sup>114</sup> The notable exception is Kosovo in 1998. NATO, afraid of another Srebrenica and convinced of the inadequacy of the UN, took matters into their own hands. Threatening airstrikes in October, only the Kosovo Verification Mission agreement stopped them. After a massacre of Albanians in Racak in January, and the Rambouillet Accords broke down, NATO began airstrikes without UN approval. The first UN resolution on the topic came March 31, 1999, a week after airstrikes began. It is also important to note that this was not a large-scale ground operation, but only airstrikes. Perhaps this indicates a force size threshold below which the US may not seek UN authorization.

<sup>115</sup> Susan J. Flores, "JTFs: Some Practical Implications," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Spring 1995), 111-113. LTC Flores illustrates how quickly JTF crisis plans had to come together in planning for Somalia. "Many JTFs are stood up to respond to international crises that require a quick reaction, the first 16 to 72 hours being critical in planning."

crisis-response pattern and landmarks help clarify national intent and the imminence of large-scale military action. Given President Trump's heated response to the 2017 DPRK missile tests, it is likely that these tests were perceived as a crisis. The US responded politically through rhetoric, UN sanctions, and requests for dialogue. The five UNSCRs in 2017 gave some insight to termination criteria with calls for the DPRK to "abandon all nuclear weapons...and any other existing weapons of mass destruction," forbids further launches using "ballistic missile technology," and established a political timeline of one year for sanctions to continue.<sup>116</sup> President Trump's vilification of North Korea as a "rogue regime" provides no useful information for planners.<sup>117</sup> While bombast between the stakeholders has transcended previous levels, officially it has still not reached the UNSCR level of authorizing "all necessary means" to denuclearize the country. Along with resolutions, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is relevant. Although denounced by the DPRK since 2003, the treaty has no expiration date and binds Russia and China, both signatories, to the United States in resolving a nuclear DPRK.<sup>118</sup> In short, the current landmarks show objectives but no international consensus on military action.

Militarily, there are likely arrays of plans on the shelf at GCC and Corps-level headquarters for those who are on the TPFDD for any action on the Korean peninsula. Undoubtedly these geographically separated HQs are refining plans and updating the NCA periodically. Likely, these headquarters have for decades been plagued by cyclic crisis surges and steady-state planning operations. Also, no new JTF has been activated for this purpose. In short, a

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<sup>116</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2397 (2017), "Non-Proliferation/Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea," December 22, accessed February 7, 2018, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2397\(2017\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2397(2017)).

<sup>117</sup> Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House), accessed February 7, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>, I.

<sup>118</sup> US Delegation to the 2010 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference, "Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons," accessed March 18, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/141503.pdf>.

major new commitment of troops is not imminent in North Korea, at least not until some new crisis or triggering event.

## Recommendations

The crisis-response pattern and relevant landmarks help planners to filter media noise and accurately deduce national policy. National intent is elusive, particularly during times of crisis. Information is everywhere, yet incomplete, with bits of policy parceled out amongst speeches, newspapers, blogs and tweets. Outside the chain of command, the crisis-response pattern and relevant landmarks should be the first place to look to understand US policy for a given crisis.

US Army and Joint doctrine do not adequately prepare planners for the uncertain policy environment, especially during times of crisis. Panama, the Gulf War, Haiti, and Bosnia were all planned under crisis conditions in policy environments that were under construction. Expanding the lens to other modern large-scale military conflicts like Somalia (1992), Afghanistan (2001), and Iraq (2003), these too were planned under the same uncertain and time-constrained conditions. That trend is likely to continue, and doctrine should make that clear. “Coherence with national policy” is often suggested in JP 5-0 without acknowledging that national policy is a moving target.<sup>119</sup> FM 6-0 even misleads staff into thinking that, “decisionmaking in a time-constrained environment usually occurs after a unit has entered the area of operations and begun operations,” which has not been true at the outset of any large-scale conflict in the last 30 years.<sup>120</sup> Planners referenced in this case study all strong voiced opinions to the contrary. Policy during crisis about whether the military will be used, for what objectives, and on what timeline, is routinely unclear, and doctrine should be updated to reflect this longstanding tendency.

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<sup>119</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, I-9.

<sup>120</sup> US Department of Defense, US Army, Field Manual (FM) 6-0 C2, *Commander and Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 9-44.

The other missing piece in current planning doctrine is how the vital information about termination criteria and timelines are ascertained. JP 5-0 assumes they are gleaned from national strategic documents such as the *National Security Strategy*, the *National Military Strategy*, and several others.<sup>121</sup> The granularity of specific guidance relevant to specific crises is unlikely to be found there for two reasons. First, crises, by definition, were not anticipated, while these strategic documents synthesize only anticipated conflicts. Second, these documents represent what the NCA wish to do rather than what they are able to do in the current environment. The crisis-response pattern and landmarks, on the other hand, overcome both inherent weaknesses of strategic documents.

Patterns and landmarks fall on the seam of civil-military relations. This seam is a weakness of contemporary military planning that should be remedied. Political and military entities need to work closer together during planning so relevant information does not get lost in between. Pending UN resolutions, upcoming election cycles, and treaties in force are all well known to other interagency partners but reside outside of the military lane. Other agencies may be aware of other landmarks, including classified agreements, germane to the operation. There was a secret transfer of power agreement between Noriega and Diaz Herrera by July 31, 1987.<sup>122</sup> One month prior to the deadline, General Noriega changed his mind and announced Diaz Herrera's retirement. This led to the actions against the US embassy in June. Like the Canal Treaty transition date, this was a pivotal date of which military planners were not aware of but other agencies were. Closer civil-military relationships, especially with the state department, during

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<sup>121</sup> US Joint Staff, JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, II-1-II-32.

<sup>122</sup> John Dinges, *Our Man in Panama: How General Noriega used the United States—And Made Millions in Drugs and Arms* (New York: Random House), 142.

military crisis planning would prevent patterns and landmarks from being overlooked.<sup>123</sup> More and more, war is a multi-disciplinary endeavor requiring more than just military planners to contemplate military actions.

Lawyers are uniquely suited to help as most landmarks are legal documents. While subjecting plans to legal reviews may be considered an afterthought, legal scrutiny for landmarks provides planners pivotal information about termination criteria and timelines of military missions that should guide planning from the start. Army Staff Judge Advocates (SJA) practice international law, which means “interpretation and application of foreign law, comparative law, martial law, and domestic law affecting military operations overseas.”<sup>124</sup> UN Resolutions and treaties are international law, and whatever ambitions the NCA has for military action will ultimately have to pass legal muster.<sup>125</sup> Legitimacy is a principle of joint operations, and these international agreements are the primary source. What the United States agrees to in the UN is empirically an accurate signal of US intentions.

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<sup>123</sup> US Department of State, “Treaties in Force: A List of Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States in Force on January 1, 2017,” accessed February 7, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/s/l/treaty/tif/index.htm>. Treaties with foreign countries are managed by the Department of State. Annually, they publish a Treaties in Force (TIF) document documenting all active treaties. The comprehensive 2017 catalogue is over 500 pages, summarizing each active treaty in a sentence or two. It also includes the date signed, date the treaty entered into force, and reference numbers to search for the entire text. Also on the DoS website are international agreements, executive orders, and other relevant international law information.

<sup>124</sup> US Department of Defense, US Army, Field Manual (FM) 1-04, *Legal Support to the Operational Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), 5-3. Disclaimer, I am not a lawyer, nor am I advocating the Army needs more of them. However, they have an important role.

<sup>125</sup> UN Security Council, website, accessed March 18, 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/index.shtml>. United Nations documents are readily accessible. The Security Council is an important subset of the UN. The five permanent members, China, Russia, United Kingdom, France, and United States, each have power to veto international intervention. The other fifteen temporary members are voted in by the general assembly, serve two year terms, and rotate chairman responsibilities, including setting the council agenda, monthly. UNSCRs represent agreed-upon goals of the United Nations and are binding international law. Another useful source of pre-resolution UN insight is published in a website available at <http://www.whatsinblue.org>, accessed January 23, 2018. The title is a reference to the text color of UNSCR final drafts going into the final stage of negotiations. The website is produced by a legal team of insiders at the United Nations and is publicly available.

Planners who are politically astute, well-connected to other agencies, and have a good understanding of the origins of crises are best suited to identify patterns on the road to war, including where a current potential operation currently lays. If the build-up has been protracted, planners may have to look back several crises. From the pattern, determine whether [A], [B], and [C] phases have been met, and if [D] is really all the NCA is waiting on. Like politicians, float a hypothesis to your higher headquarters about what phase a future operation is currently in before commencing planning. Look for landmarks amongst the pattern, and read the President's mind.

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