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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
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BAGHDAD, OR BUST?

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in Partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Departments of the Navy and Army.

S: *Patrick W. Blazek*

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**Abstract of
Baghdad, or Bust ?**

The paper compares the decision to terminate "Operation Desert Storm" against the strategic aims articulated in United Nations Resolutions 660-678. It argues that continuing beyond the termination point would have taken the United States beyond the culminating point of victory. It compares the outcome against two hypothetical sequels that many propose would have established a longer-lasting peace. It analyzes the political cost and the military capability to continue fighting against the potential gains. It argues that strict adherence to the "Weinberger Doctrine" limits the ability to justify an escalation of war aims if a nation or coalition has reached them before it reaches the culminating point of victory.

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Preface

Nature and Scope

This paper compares and contrasts the decision to terminate "Operation Desert Storm" against the stated strategic aims and two hypothetical sequels.

Specific information concerning pre-war aims came from United Nations Resolutions 660-678, and from remarks made by President Bush, General Schwarzkopf and other senior military and government officials of the United States. The information on military conditions at the termination point were from Triumph Without Victory, On Strategy II, and a previous operations paper titled "The Hundred Hour End Point".

Delimiting Factors

There are countless hypothetical sequels that could be used to compare the effect of continuing "Desert Storm" beyond its termination point. This paper will limit its scope to two:

- The effect of continuing a few hours more until Basra was secured and the "Hammarabi" Division of the Republican Guards facing the 24th Mechanized Infantry Division was destroyed.
- The effect of continuing until Baghdad was secured, and Saddam Hussein was captured or killed.

These two sequels represent the options that many feel would have enabled the people of Iraq to regain control of the government from Saddam Hussein and the Baath party. These analysts feel the removal of Saddam Hussein and the Baath party would have led to a more stable government and would have improved regional peace and stability.

The analysis of our ability to conduct these sequels and the associated costs will help determine whether it would have been too costly from a military or political standpoint to continue.

Definitions

This paper analyzes the termination decision from the culminating point of the attack, and the culminating point of victory. Clausewitz defined the culminating point of the attack and the culminating point of victory. The culminating point of the attack is that point where the attacker loses his superiority and must halt and assume the defense while he regains strength before continuing. The culminating point of victory is when one side or the other has achieved superiority in physical strength and the other side can't recover. The political culminating point of victory is defined as a point before either side has reached superiority but the continuation of hostilities will result in the loss of international public, military and moral support. It may also be defined as the point in which one side has reached superiority but the other refuses to accept his opponents will. International, public and moral support is lost as the stronger side continues to destroy his weaker enemy.

For this analysis, it is the point at which the allies, coalition partners, or the United Nations withdraws support, or the American public no longer believes we are fighting a "moral" or "Just" war.

"Just war" is defined as a war fought with the consent of the international community and the American Public to defend a territorial right, for self-defense, or to right a wrong.

Chapter 1- Introduction

The United States and its coalition partners terminated Operation "Desert Storm" on 28 February 1991, six weeks after the air campaign and exactly one-hundred hours after a massive ground campaign began.

The initial euphoria indicated the coalition had won a great victory. The Kuwaiti and Iraqi deserts were littered with the burnt-out hulks of Iraqi tanks, infantry carriers, artillery pieces, and trucks. Countless enemy dead and wounded were scattered between the Saudi Arabian border, Kuwait City, and Basra, in southern Iraq. An early estimate on 27 February indicated between 50-100,000 prisoners of war had surrendered and the Iraqi infrastructure had been severely damaged.

Coalition casualties were light. Coalition forces were deployed in combat formations and were nearly full-strength. They were within 150 miles of Baghdad with a weakened enemy in front of them. An enemy that they had destroyed with relative ease in every battle and engagement, so far.

Although Iraq was out of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein was still in power and the Republican Guards still had several hundred tanks. The Iraqi Air Force had sufficient forces to help Hussein maintain control of Iraq. No one had ever stated that removal of Saddam Hussein was an essential aim but many analysts felt as long as he was in power the region would not be peaceful.¹

If these conditions existed why didn't we continue the fight? We could generate overwhelming combat power and with more effort could have crushed the Republican

¹US News and World Report, Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War, Random House Books, Toronto, 1991. pp 394-415.

Guards. A little bit longer and we might have changed the balance of power so that dissident rebels could have overthrown Hussein. So why did we stop?

One reason is that we had accomplished our stated goals. In a press conference on 27 February 1991 General Schwarzkopf said, "*we have achieved our aims, Iraqs military is defeated, Kuwait is liberated and we have won a great victory.*"²

Clausewitz says, "*no one starts a war-or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve.*"³ Our primary goal was to restore the legitimate government of Kuwait. General Schwarzkopf was right. We had achieved our aims but had we really won a great victory? Most analysts now believe we stopped far short of the point that would have preserved long-term peace and stability in the region--the removal of Saddam Hussein from power.

Deciding when to terminate war is one of the most complex decisions the commander faces. No battlefield calculus can measure the best time or conditions to end the fighting. The "art" of war is deciding to quit when you have created the military and political conditions that will cause the enemy to accept your will.

A good war termination strategy should determine the objectives you want to accomplish and the conditions that must exist to force the enemy to accept them. Most wars are terminated when one side wins a clear victory over the other, by negotiation when one side or the other has reached the culminating point of victory, or by a unilateral decision.

In Operation Desert Storm we achieved a clear military victory over the forces in Kuwait and southern Iraq. We forced Saddam Hussein and Iraq to accept the will of the

²Summers, Harry, On Strategy II: A Critical Analysis of the Gulf War, Dell Books, New York, 1992 pp 275-276.

³Clausewitz, On War, edited by Howard and Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1976, p579.

United Nations. He left Kuwait, the legitimate government was restored, and for the most part Iraq's offensive military capability was destroyed.⁴

While we may have achieved our aims we did not win a total victory. Saddam Hussein continues to pursue weapons of mass destruction. He has failed to pay war reparations. He flaunts United Nations Sanctions violations, provokes military incidents, and represses human rights. He constantly promotes regional instability and tries to assume what Von Moltke described as "*the role of the injured*," to gain legitimacy.⁵

Why didn't we continue until we had gained a total victory? Some argue we could have finished the destruction of the final Republican Guards division near Basra if we would have continued fighting a few hours more. They argue this would have given the dissident rebels a better balance of power and they would have overthrown Hussein and the Baath party, replacing it with a moderate and tolerant leadership.

Others argue that we should have continued until we had either killed Hussein, or captured and tried him in international court for war and environmental crimes.

Why didn't the coalition or the United States select these options? Could we have continued or were we at the culminating point of the attack? Did front-line forces have enough fuel, food, and ammunition? Were they too exhausted to continue? Were enemy forces too strong? Would the fight have escalated beyond Iraq?

Would coalition partners have continued attacking into Iraq if it meant the slaughter of their Arab brothers? Would other allies join the United States? If not, were we strong enough militarily to act by ourselves? Would the United Nations support further fighting?

Were the aims of the individual coalition partners similar enough to enable us to escalate them? Or had they become a "tyranny" that limited our ability to increase them?

⁴***Triumph Without Victory*, p 415.**

⁵***Eyck, Bismarck and the German Empire*, p44.**

Did strict application of the "Weinberger Doctrine" hold us hostage to our initial aims? Could we escalate our aims and maintain public and international support if we attacked Iraq or removed its leader?

Would international law enable us to justify removing the government of one country to restore the government of another? Would the destruction of the Republican Guard promote regional stability or would it change the balance of power between Iraq/Iran and de-stabilize the region?

This paper will compare the costs of continuing to achieve the two hypothetical sequels against the potential benefits gained in regional stability and long-term United States influence in the region.

It's difficult to use hypothetical sequels to analyze a thesis. The answers to the questions proposed in this section will prove that the United States and her coalition partners made the right decision to terminate "Operation Desert Storm". Going further would have taken them beyond the culminating point of the attack and the culminating point of victory.

Chapter 2-Discussion

Introduction

The thesis of this paper is that; **continuing 'Operation Desert Storm' beyond the termination point would have taken the United States beyond the culminating point of victory.**

The premise is that the coalition accomplished the legitimate aims authorized in UN Resolutions 660-678 with minimum friendly casualties when it decided to stop. The paper argues that continuing was not possible from a political or military standpoint.

The Arab, international, and US public opinions, the state of affairs in Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey and the Soviet Union did not favor continuation. The coalition could not legitimately attack and remove Hussein from power. Only an internal coup would be acceptable to world opinion.

Legitimacy and Authority

The United States acting in concert with the United Nations, the Arab League and its coalition partners forcibly ejected Iraq from Kuwait to ensure compliance with United Nations resolutions 660-678.

When the United States decides to act unilaterally or with a group of nations to wage war it seeks to garner public and international support for the legitimacy of its actions. In this case the United Nations and the United States were given the legal

(legitimate) authority to wage war when the United Nations Security Council ratified Resolution 678 on 29 November 1990.⁶

This resolution noted that, "Iraqs' failure to comply with previous resolutions to restore Kuwait and her legitimate government placed her in violation of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Resolution 678, *"Authorized the , Member states acting in conjunction with the Government of Kuwait, unless Iraq ... implemented UN Resolutions before 15 January 1991, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Resolution 660.* (in essence condemning the Iraqi invasion and demanding unconditional withdrawal) *and all subsequent relevent resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area.*"⁷

In general the United Nations attempts to apply a commonly accepted principle of international law to help maintain world order, justice, and peace.

International law and the United Nations Charter generally recognize order as "*the integrity of states,*" justice as, "*the provision for the recognition of states and formal equality of treatment within a legal community of nations,*" (such as, the United Nations, Arab League, etc;) , and peace as, "*the normal state of affairs in which order and justice...co-exist.*"⁸

The United States will conduct unsanctioned combat if its vital or national interests are threatened but it generally prefers to justify the legal authority for its actions. It tries to apply the "Just Cause" theory whenever applicable. "Just Cause" is described as actions taken, "*for self-defense against an attack, to recover something wrongfully taken, or as punishment for evil.*" These principles constitute legitimacy in conducting operations according to international law.⁹

⁶Triumph Without Victory, p 429.

⁷Ibid. pp 429-430

⁸Johnson, James, and Weigel, George, Just War and the Gulf War, Ethics and Public Policy Center, University Press Club, Lanham, MD. 1991, p 37.

⁹Ibid. p 71.

The United Nations authorized the multi-national coalition to use force to remove Iraq from Kuwait. It did not grant specific authority to invade Iraq, destroy her military, or remove her government.

The vague terms, "use all necessary means," could be interpreted as tacit permission if they are considered in isolation. However, previous United Nations Resolutions are insightful in analyzing this argument.

The concern in Resolution 661 is that, "*Iraq restore the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Kuwait.*" Resolution 665 states, "*determined to bring an end to the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq which threatens the existence of a member state.*"¹⁰

The clear intent of the United Nations was to restore Kuwait and its legitimate government. Once Iraq had withdrawn or been expelled it would be difficult to justify continuing the attack into Iraq which may in turn threaten its existence. A limited objective to destroy the remaining enemy near Basra may have been acceptable. However, a full-scale attack into Iraq to capture or kill Hussein and remove his government would have exceeded the United Nations goals and intent.

For the United States, legitimacy in conducting this operation was critical to gain international, Arab, and public support. U.S. leadership must convince the public and congress that a war is justified, we're fighting for the right reasons, it will be of a short duration, and is in our best interests.

In his book Desert Victory, Norman Friedman states, "*Viet Nam didn't make Americans decry war, but instead it's a long protracted war they abhor. The U.S. public prefers a sharp, high-intensity conflict to an ill-defined and lengthy, low-intensity war.*" More importantly he further stated that, "*the US public wants to think its supporting moral wars.*"¹¹

¹⁰Triumph Without Victory, pp 416-421.

¹¹Friedman, Norman, Desert Victory, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD., 1991, p 255.

Saddam Husseins illegal invasion and seizure of Kuwait did not seem significant enough to many Americans and Congress to commit the US military. The common slogan became "no blood for oil." It's doubtful that President Bush could have gained overwhelming public, international, and congressional support for US involvement for purely economic reasons, despite the fact that if left unchallenged, Iraq controlled one-fifth of the world's oil reserves with Kuwait annexed.¹²

When the Arab league voted to condemn Iraqs actions and Iraqi soldiers began to brutally torture Kuwaiti soldiers, rape women, and dismantle and remove everything of value from Kuwait, the world and the US public had a "moral or just war" to fight. Hussein's further actions such as; using innocent third party hostages to protect high-value targets from attack before the war began, and his attack of civilians in Israel helped maintain the anti-Iraq, anti-Hussein sentiment.¹³

It would have been impossible to implement the United Nations decision to use force without the consent of the Arab League. Although they voted to condemn the Iraqi actions and commit forces to the coalition, they preferred to negotiate a settlement to return to "status quo." They did not really want to fight an Arab brother, but Iraq had threatened the United Arab Emirates, Hussein had proven himself untrustworthy in his dealings with Egypt, Jordan and Saudia Arabia, and he had illegally attacked Kuwait. Despite their sympatheic feelings towards their complaints the Iraqi actions placed them outside the Arab League.¹⁴

The intent of the Arab League was to put the government of Kuwait back in power and settle the dispute at the bargaining table. They had no intention of overturning the government of Iraq. In fact, many were distrustful of United States involvement and perceived regional interests.

¹² Laurent ,Erik, and Salinger, Peirre, Secret Dossier: The Hidden Agenda Behind the Gulf War, Penguin Books,New York, 1991, pp 88-89.

¹³Ibid. The entire book talks about the intent of the Arab League to negotiate and the US pressure to act with force.

¹⁴Ibid.

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia made the most difficult decision. He allowed the United States to put its forces on Arab soil to fight a brother Arab. He made this decision because the United States convinced him that Iraq was going to attack Saudi Arabia.

Among the Arab nations the decision met with mixed emotions. Most leaders felt that it was a necessary evil but the Arab people were not in favor of it. In Jordan 40,000 demonstrators marched on the Presidential Palace in support of Hussein and Iraq. In Egypt the majority of the population did not support President Mubarek's decision to use Egyptian troops.

King Fahd's comments when he approved the presence of US troops and agreed to provide them with logistical support reflect the Arab Leagues intent. He said. "*One has to ask why Saddam Hussein creates these forces...It is not just for aggression against Kuwait.. {he} aspires to something larger...the United States has no ulterior motive...If we were to do something with our American Friends it would be only for defense-not as aggressors. The most important thing is to protect our country.*"¹⁵

If the United States had forced the coalition to attack Iraq more than likely it would have lost the support of the Arab League. It would certainly put Arab leaders in a tough position of supporting the coalition or destroying a fellow Arab country. The loss of support of the Arab League would have devastated the United States logistics and support capability to continue.

The operation to forcibly remove Iraq from Kuwait had full international diplomatic support and approval. A continued attack when these objectives were met would have placed the United States motives in question and would have exceeded the legitimate authority the coalition had.

¹⁵Triumph Without Victory. p 86.

Potential Outcomes of a Total Iraqi Defeat

One of the primary goals of the United Nations was to restore international peace and stability in the region. In an October 1990 report the Washington based Strategic Studies Group which includes Les Aspin, Robert McFarlane and Sam Nunn, reported that the defeat of Iraq's military would most likely have the opposite effect. They reported, "*it's possible that a military defeat of Iraq could lead to a number of negative associated consequences in the region. Iraq's neighbors might be tempted to settle old scores, leading to a longer and broader conflict.*"¹⁶

They further warned against potential terrorism against Americans and other foreign nationals in the region (Hussein had warned King Fahd of the potential for bloodshed from terrorists and rebels if Saudi Arabia supported US troop presence)¹⁷ increased Arab resentment towards the U.S, and potential de-stabilizing problems in countries like Jordan and Algeria.¹⁸

The balance of military power between Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia had helped maintain stability in the region. If the balance of power was altered too drastically it may require a longer US presence as a peacekeeping force. Many Arab nations and US leaders were concerned that a reduced Iraqi military capability would encourage 'Islamic Fundamentalists' to use aggression to achieve their aims, especially Iran.

If this occurred the US would become involved again. Although leaving Iraq a stronger military may leave Hussein in power it would be more stabilizing in the long-run. He may continue to try and test the will of the coalition if he maintained some capability

¹⁶Washington Strategic Study Group, Restoring the Balance: US Strategy and the Gulf Crisis, Washington Institute, Washington D.C., 1991 pp 31-33.

¹⁷Secret Dossier, pp 158-159.

¹⁸Ibid. Pages 158-169 discusses the concerns among Arab leaders and their people that they were violating a long standing tradition when they invited foreign forces to resolve this issue, from pg 167 " A tradition that if a nation whose religion is Islamic allowed infidels to fight on its soil, all other Islamic countries had to turn against the renegade."

but the presence required to respond and enforce sanctions would be smaller and at less risk than if another war broke out.

Another potential outcome is that as Iraq became desperate she may have begun terrorist and missile attacks on Arab countries that were supporting the United Nations. Arab leaders were already being questioned by their public for allowing increased outside influence from the west to dictate regional policy. Further attempts to destroy Iraq or remove Hussein from power would have fueled the fire against a return to colonial imperialism.¹⁹

Arab leaders had contained these sentiments by reassuring their public that the United States was acting in the best interest of the Arab League, and not herself. A continued attack without Arab requests would have negated this argument. The Arab states were not going to ask the United States or the United Nations to destroy the Iraqi military capability because they needed it to maintain the balance of power in the region, (so long as it was conventional, and defensive in nature).

The United Nations Resolutions goals were to return the region to peace and stability with the sovereignty of member nations intact. An attack to destroy the Iraqi military or weakening it so that Iraq was vulnerable was contrary to these goals.

Military Conditions at Termination

Regardless of whether the Arab League, the United Nations or the US approved of continuing further it could not be done unless coalition or US forces were in condition to continue. After four days of combat operations the forward troops were physically and mentally exhausted and supplies and equipment were strung out in the desert. One 1st

¹⁹Ibid. See note on previous footnote.

Armored Division tank gunner was reportedly so tired he fell asleep while his crew was fighting during the 'Battle of 73 Easting'.²⁰

Five out of six M1A1 Armored Divisions were critical for fuel forward of the Division Support Area. The lead US task forces of the 24th Mechanized Division near Basra had 50 gallons (1-2 hours operation time) in their lead tanks and their organic fuel trucks were racing for more. Ammunition was in theater but forward units and artillery batteries were short some critical munitions. They could not sustain a prolonged deliberate attack without resupply.²¹

The breakneck speed of the Iraqi withdrawal and the coalition pursuit was appropriate but the result was that although individual units were in combat formations, they were not positioned for a deliberate attack against an enemy defending his homeland.

The majority of the positioning, logistics, and maintenance problems could be fixed within twenty-four hours. A meal and a few hours rest would help the physical exhaustion.

The mental exhaustion was another thing. As Colonel John Brown (a task force commander during the fight) put it, "*Physical exhaustion is easy to understand; psychological exhaustion (battlefield stress/fatigue) is less tangible . The harsh realities of combat...drained the enthusiasm of the young soldier...They had seen exploding vehicles, charred bodies...and some of the Iraqis they had machine-gunned must have wanted to surrender; but how can you tell in the distance or dark?...Women and children were caught in the carnage along the 'highway of death' and they had witnessed it.*"²²

Could these soldiers have been asked to continue fighting against a more determined enemy interspersed with the civilian populace? Captain H.R. McMaster a cavalry troop commander testified in congress that his troops were concerned about how

²⁰Triumph Without Victory. p 369.

²¹Brown John S., Colonel US Army, " The Hundred Hour End Point," a 1992 Operations Paper Essay, p 2.

²²Ibid. p 6-7

they were slaughtering the enemy at the end of the Battle for 73 Easting. How much more could they take and be effective?²³ Certainly there were forces that were in better condition to continue than the frontline troops but they would take time to move forward. Waiting longer would be increase casualties.

On the other hand, the Iraqi's weren't much better off. In the Kuwaiti theater they had been under air or ground attack for six weeks. In Kuwait, they had been devastated but estimates were that several hundred tanks and 10,000 Infantry escaped the encirclement.

While it's true the Iraqi's had been no match for coalition forces so far, (many units surrendered without a fight), some units had fought very hard. On "Objective Norfolk," Iraqi anti-tank gunners crawled between tanks to try to get an ATGM shot at them before being machine-gunned. Once coalition forces entered Iraq they would be fighting for the defense of their homeland. Planners expected them to fight tenaciously to defend Iraq. Many local terrorists and stay behind forces were also expected to attack US and coalition forces.²⁴

At Basra, intelligence reports indicated that the Republican Guards "Hammarabi " Division was dug-in in the swamps and marshes and among the civilian populace. Hussein, sensing defeat had hedged his bet. He kept forty-two Infantry Divisions in Iraq. He protected his Air Force and helicopter fleet by keeping them from harm, and kept one Republican Guard Mechanized and one Motorized Rifle Divison in central reserve. These forces could have inflicted heavy casualties on attacking coalition forces.²⁵

The attacking coalition forces would have suffered much larger casualties for minimum gains if Saddam Hussein could not be overthrown, captured, or killed.

²³Personal interview between the author and Captain McMaster when he was a student at the Army's Combined Arms and Services Staff School May 1992.

²⁴Triumph Without Victory. pp394-415.

²⁵Brown, "The Hundred Hour End Point", p10.

Political Conditions at Termination

United Nations

The United Nations felt that all initial objectives had been accomplished at the time of the ceasefire. The US led coalition forces had liberated Kuwait, restored her legitimate government and had destroyed the majority of Iraq's offensive military capability.

The United Nations wanted the region to return to peace and "status quo." After the ceasefire it acted quickly to recognize, "*the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Iraq and Kuwait,*" in UN Resolution 686, (2 March 1991).²⁶

This resolution indicates the political nature of the United Nations. The United Nations gets referent power by acting rationally in accordance with legitimate authority granted under international law. The UN had no intentions of interfering with Iraq's government (except to enforce sanctions) because it had no authority to do so.

Iraq

Despite Iraq's crushing military defeat Saddam Hussein was still in power. Iraq's infrastructure for basic needs was destroyed, the economy was a disaster, and it appeared that several rebel factions were going to move to take power. Hussein had not made rational decisions in avoiding war in the eyes of most leaders. If the war continued, or escalated he was unpredictable, ruthless, and dangerous. He was interested in linking his actions to the Palestinian Homeland issue and was gaining some Arab support. Any aggression outside the authority of the United Nations might enhance this argument.

Iran

Iran was rebuilding a strong military and attempting to gain submarines and nuclear weapons. She had recently signed a peace agreement with Iraq but she still had deep seated resentment over the Iran/Iraq war. A weakened Iraq meant a strong Iran with ties to Iraq's rebel population. Iran was unpredictable but most experts feel she was

²⁶Triumph Without Victory, p 430-432.

merely waiting to become stronger before acting to install 'Islamic Fundamentalism ' in the Arab world.

Saudi Arabia

King Fahd was under internal pressure to limit the length of US troop presence. Powerful oil and government officials were concerned that long-term US presence would increase US influence. They were also concerned that large numbers of foreign troops would be on sacred soil during the 'Feast of Ramadan' the most holy of ceremonies. Some Saudi leaders felt the Saudi Arabian culture was in danger of being influenced by the presence of large numbers of christian and women leaders brought into the country when King Fahd had helped the 'infidels' defeat a fellow Arab.

Egypt

President Mubarek had a personal dislike for Saddam Hussein who had insulted and lied to him. The 50 million people in his country opposed using Egyptian troops at all let alone for escalated aims to overthrow Hussein. Mubarek gained a \$7 billion debt forgiveness for his support and clearly wanted to increase his countries and personal influence in the region.²⁷

Syria

Syria was looking for help in resolving the Lebanon, Palestinian, and Israeli issues. She was also looking for a superpower to replace her ties with the Soviet Union. She felt if she supported the US in this operation she may be able to gain military equipment and technology to replace her aging Soviet equipment. She had a long-term dislike for Iraq and would act in her own best interest. A devastated Iraq gave her more regional power and influence.²⁸

²⁷**Secret Dossier**, pp 158-162

²⁸*ibid.* p 167.

Turkey

Turkey supported the economic sanctions which cost her \$300 million a year to shut down the oil pipeline between her and Iraq. She did not support the use of her bases during the war but did so reluctantly after the war to protect Kurdish rebels and provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian populace.²⁹

Jordan

King Hussein and his country supported Iraq. This support isolated them for the Arab and international communities severely straining their fragile economy.

Soviet Union

The Soviet Union was breaking apart. Gorbachev was facing a number of internal problems and gave the US the lead and his support for actions in the gulf. His support caused great concerns among hard-line communist party leaders who feared he was also giving up influence in the region. A quick solution and US withdrawal was in Gorbachev's best interest.³⁰

The United States

The Congress had given President Bush permission to use US Forces to restore Kuwait by a small majority. A limited anti-war movement was concerned about " blood for oil", but the majority of the country rallied behind the troops. The public was concerned about large casualty estimates and preventing another long and protracted war like Viet Nam. The media blitz of early success and small casualty reports left them euphoric. The pictures of Kuwait City being liberated, burned and destroyed enemy equipment, and scores of prisoners surrendering convinced them the war was over and the troops were coming home soon. Many of them were concerned that the Scud missile

²⁹Ibid. p 159.

³⁰Secret Dossier, Discussed on numerous pages as part of President Bush and Secretary Baker's shuttle diplomacy to gain consensus.

attacks and threat of chemical and biological weapons use would increase the longer we fought. They wanted the war to end as soon as possible.

The United States wanted to maintain long-term influence in the region and had been trying to place equipment in Saudi Arabia for years. It hoped its' good intentions would enable it to overcome the fears of the Arab League and King Fahd. The ability to maintain influence and presence in the region was predicated on credibility. President Bush promised we would leave when Kuwait was restored and Iraq was punished. United Nations Secretary General Perez de Cueuler, was widely quoted as saying, "*the United States will not attack Iraq or its' armed forces if withdrawal from Kuwait has been achieved and the situation has returned to what it was prior to August 2nd,*"³¹ as he was trying to prevent war while building consensus for US presence in Gulf States. If we would have continued to attack Iraq, or encouraged the coalition to continue, we would have lost credibility and put Arab leaders like King Fahd and President Mubarek at greater risk of losing popular support. From a political standpoint every nation had more to lose than we could possibly gain from continuing the attack.

The Effect of the "Weinberger Doctrine" on Continuation

The "Weinberger Doctrine" is widely viewed as the 'panacea' for success when committing forces. It can also hold strategic planners 'hostage' if the enemy isn't compelled to do our will when we have accomplished the stated aims. Clausewitz says, "*in war the results are never final.*"³² Strategists must continually re-assess the effectiveness of the end-state they have selected and must adjust strategic aims when they are not meeting the political objectives.

³¹Secret Dossier, p 31.

³²Clausewitz, On War, p 90.

Two of the key elements of the "Weinberger Doctrine" are in essence:

- **Commit Forces to combat with clearly defined political and military objectives**
- **Before committing have the support of the American People³³**

President Bush accomplished both of these goals. In fact he did such a good job of convincing the public that our objectives were limited and that Saddam Hussein was never a target it would have been very hard to escalate our war aims. If we would have increased our aims the public outcry of "blood for oil" would start again. As long as we had limited aims the public was convinced that they were supporting a moral and "just war." If we continued our motives would have been questioned by an American public concerned over more casualties for no good reason.

The United Nations Resolutions also reflect the influence of the "Weinberger Doctrine." The aims were specific, they were limited, and they had the support of the American Public, and the international community. However, once they were met the President would be forced to regain support for an expanded goal. In essence, the goals held us 'hostage' and prevented us from escalating them without additional justification.

The Hypothetical Sequels

The coalition members accomplished their goals on 28 February 1991. Any consideration for continuing should be made after comparing the benefits gained against those already earned, and the costs in terms of lives lost and regional political impact to continue. The decision to continue could not be justified unless substantial benefits would be gained. The coalition had already reached its goals when the decision to terminate was made.

³³Dubois, Thomas, "The Weinberger Doctrine and the Liberation of Kuwait", Parameters, Winter 1991-1992. pp25-38. The article discusses the elements of the Weinberger Doctrine and applies it to Operation Desert Shield, and Desert Storm.

The hypothetical sequels should be measured against:

- **Purpose.** Would the fighting alter the long-term outcome? Would the region be more or less stable?
- **Achievability.** Could the coalition or US Forces create the military and political conditions to achieve the options?
- **Cost.** Would the long-term gain justify the risk of escalation and increased casualties?

**Option 1 Continue the Attack towards Basra and Defeat of the Republican Guards
'Hammarabi Divison'**

The purpose of this option was to defeat the remaining committed Republican Guards Divison in the Kuwaiti Theater. The planners felt that this option would change the balance of power in favor of the rebels and they would then be able to overthrow Saddam Hussein and the Baath party.

The belief was that if Saddam Hussein could be removed from power internally, a moderate and tolerant government would come to power. An internal 'coup' would be acceptable to the Arab League, the international community and would reflect the will of the Iraqi people. On the other hand, a direct removal of Hussein by outside forces has implications concerning sovereignty, legitimacy etc. ³⁴

From a military standpoint, the US 24th Mechanized Division was in position to attack and secure Basra. The Division had been successful using mounted forces to make an historic attack around the flank. However, the terrain around Basra does not favor a mounted attack. It consists of marshes, swamps, and once inside Basra, urban buildings. The advantages of firepower and protection from enemy artillery would be lost when the division dismounted to attack. Casualties would be high. The enemy forces were also

³⁴Strategic Studies Group, Restoring the Balance, p33

intermixed with the civilian populace. If the attacking forces didn't use artillery they would take more casualties, if they did they would kill many civilians in Basra. ³⁵

The Hammarabi Division was expected to fight very hard and only its annihilation would result in a successful attack. Eventually the 24th would have succeeded but it's unlikely this would accomplish the purpose. If the rebels could not overthrow Hussein, the attack would be meaningless.

The resulting added loss in life would have gained nothing. It would have given Hussein the opportunity to try to fragment the coalition because we were now attacking his country without authority. The long-term impact would not change. Hussein would still be in power, but the coalition (read the US) would have lost more casualties. The US public and most likely congressional support would have been withdrawn, and the media would have a heyday producing articles about the civilian casualties and needless slaughter of our troops.

Option 2- An Attack to seize Baghdad and Kill, or Capture Saddam Hussein

The purpose of this option is clear. The direct removal of the problem-Saddam Hussein. In the 27 February 1991 press conference General Schwarzkopf said, "*Ladies and Gentlemen, when we were here, we were 150 miles from Baghdad and there was nobody between us and Baghdad. If it had been our intention to destroy the country, to over-run the country, we could have done it unopposed for all intents and purposes from the afternoon of the 24th.*"³⁶

If we could, why didn't we? One reason is that we did not have the legitimate authority to do this. Militarily we may have been able to accomplish this but probably not as easy as General Schwarzkopf indicated. Politically this would have been a disaster.

³⁵Brown, "The Hundred Hour End Point", pp10-13.

³⁶Summers, On Strategy II, pp 275-276.

An attack to remove the government of a nation and kill or bring him to trial would set a dangerous precedent for world order. It would be outside the boundary of international law.

Politically, the Arab league could not have supported a direct long-term attack into Iraq. This would have been viewed as a direct act of aggression against an Arab brother and contrary to our promises to respected Arab leaders. Arab nations would have been forced to withdraw host nation support.

The entire ground campaign and a large part of the air campaign infrastructure was on Saudi Arabian soil. Huge stocks of parts, ammunition and equipment were located in staging areas and ports. Saudi Arabia provided food, fuel, and water for the operation. The US and remaining allied forces could not rely on off-shore support to sustain a major land campaign.³⁷

Militarily we could gain local superiority against conventional forces and could successfully attack. However, as Iraq became more desperate, and the lines of communications became longer, the risk of fighting terrorists and potential enemy use of chemical and biological weapons make predictions of the outcome impossible.

We did not know how the resolve of the Iraqi people might influence the outcome. The Iraqi's are a proud people who might resist to the last person if their countries survival was threatened. As Hussein told April Glaspie, *"We can not come all the way to you in the US., but individual Arabs may reach you... You can come to Iraq with aircraft and missiles, but do not push us to the point at which we cease to care. When we feel that you want to injure our pride and destroy Iraqi's chance for a high standard of living, we will cease to care, and death will be our choice. Then we would not care if you fired a hundred missiles for each one we fired because, without pride, life would have no value."*³⁸

³⁷Ziegler, Laura , Lieutenant Commander, USN, "On to Baghdad," a 1992 Operations Paper, p12.

³⁸Secret Dossier, pg 52.

If the majority of all Iraqis felt this way the road to Baghdad would be paved in blood. Iraq had already tried to escalate the war by attacking Israel. What actions would she do to protect her existence. She certainly would have tried to enlist help from other Arabs to maintain her territory. A large percentage of Jordanians may have helped her fight for example. Would this escalation cause us to exceed the culminating point of the attack?

If we were eventually successful, we would have been forced to annihilate the Iraqi military. The use of the firepower required to accomplish this would result in huge civilian casualties. The added loss of lives and the great risk of escalation was not worth the risk.

If we were successful Iraq would be so devastated and weak that we would be forced to rebuild her infrastructure, help establish a new government, and provide her protection from outside attacks. A long-term, high-cost prospect, that no coalition partner would want, and the US public would abhor.

An attack into Iraq and the resultant long-term US presence and influence in the region would not be favorable solutions to Iran and the hard-liners in the (then) Soviet Union. Over time the region would be less, not more stable.

War Termination

Wars end when one side wins a clear victory over the other, by negotiation when the price to continue is becoming too high, or when one side withdraws and refuses to fight any more.

Clausewitz warned us not to start a war unless we had a clear vision of what we want to accomplish. A good war termination strategy should outline the specific objectives you want to accomplish and the price you are willing to pay to achieve them. It should also outline the conditions that must exist for the enemy to accept our will.

To paraphrase Clausewitz, "*the purpose of war is to compel the enemy to do your will instead of his own.*"³⁹ To accomplish this you must understand the objectives of your enemy, his willingness to fight, and the price he is willing to pay to gain his objective.

Simply assessing your objectives, those of the enemy, and the price both sides are willing to pay may not be enough. You must also consider the personalities, and the domestic and international relations that influence your enemies leadership and decisions.

If you are fighting a leader that makes rational decisions it's much easier to determine the conditions that will enable you to win. An irrational decision maker may fight to the bitter end despite knowing that he will lose.

During Operations 'Desert Shield and Desert Storm,' Saddam Hussein did not make rational decisions to avoid combat. His words to April Glaspie concerning Iraqi pride, coupled with his actions to establish his authority, were important insights into developing a war termination strategy.

Iraq attacked, overran and annexed Kuwait to improve her economic conditions and gain access to the Persian Gulf. Hussein refused to negotiate and refused to recognize outside influence because it was against his nature to accept censure from anyone. Iraq was willing to pay the initial price but as coalition forces destroyed her troops in Kuwait she withdrew. The US and coalition forces created the conditions to terminate war. If we had continued the attack Iraq would have intensified its defense, and fought to the bitter end unless a more moderate leader took over.

The UN wanted to create the conditions to restore Kuwait and improve regional stability. The coalition felt that the destruction of the Republican Guards in Kuwait would cause Iraq to withdraw. That's precisely what happened. Clausewitz also says, "*not every war leads to a final decision, and, one must know the point to which superiority can be carried in order not to overshoot the target.*"⁴⁰

³⁹Clausewitz, On War, p 579.

⁴⁰Clausewitz, On War, p 570.

The United Nations and the Coalition stated their aims. The most important aim was the restoration of Kuwait. They accomplished this on 28 February. Attacking further would have hardened the Iraqi resistance, may have escalated the attacks on Israel, started the use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, and may have caused other Arab Nations or individuals to fight in support of Iraq. Coalition forces would have overshot the target if they had continued into Iraq.

Conclusion

The thesis of this paper was that, *the United States would have gone beyond the culminating point of victory if it had continued Operation Desert Storm*. This paper proves the United States and its' coalition partners made the right decision to terminate the war. Going beyond the termination decision would have taken them beyond the culminating point of victory.

Clausewitz says, "*in the advance you can exceed the culminating point of victory in the following ways.*"

- " You lose allies"
- " You lose men and equipment"
- " You expand your lines of communication"
- " You enter hostile enemy territory"
- " The defender gains allies"
- " The defender being in real danger makes a greater effort"⁴¹

The only option that would have made any difference in the long-run would have been eliminating Hussein. If we continued the attack to accomplish that we would create all of the conditions that Clausewitz said would force us to the culminating point of victory.

⁴¹Clausewitz, On War, pp 566-573.

This paper compared the decision to terminate against the strategic aims outlined by the United Nations and the United States. All of them were met. It also analyzed the legitimate authority to wage war, the potential outcome of defeating Iraq's military on regional stability, the military and political conditions at termination, the limitations of the "Weinberger Doctrine" on escalating war aims, and the elements of a good war termination strategy.

The evidence is clear. Continuing further would have exceeded the legitimate authority of the United Nations. The United States would have lost allies while Iraq gained them. The lines of communications would have extended, Iraq would have fought to the bitter end inflicting large casualties on US forces while sustaining devastating civilian and military casualties herself. As she became more desperate she may have resorted to chemical or biological weapons and terrorist attacks.

If we had continued the Arab Nations would not only stop fighting they would stop supporting us. If we lost host nation support we would also quickly reach the culminating point of the attack.

The American public, the Arab League and the international community believed the US had limited objectives in the region. Further attacks would seriously damage United States credibility and ability to maintain any long-term influence or presence in the region. Saddam Hussein may have gained some legitimacy for his actions, and he may have gained more support for linking his attack to the Palestinian Homeland issue.

Finally, the increased long-term cost and troop presence that the destruction of the Iraqi military and the removal or collapse of her government would be too high. The American public and the international community would not bear it.

The termination decision was made at the right time. Going further would have taken the United States beyond the culminating point of victory.

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