

***EXIT STRATEGY: THE NEXIS OF POLICY AND STRATEGY***

*"Neither we nor the international community has either the responsibility or the means to do whatever it takes for as long as it takes to rebuild nations."*

*- Tony Lake, U.S. National Security Advisor, March 6, 1996*

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## ***Introduction***

*“Theory, therefore, demands that at the outset of a war its character and scope should be determined on the basis of the political probabilities. The closer these political probabilities drive war toward the absolute [Total War], the more the belligerent states are involved and drawn in to its vortex, the clearer appear the connections between its separate actions, and the more imperative the need not to take the first step without considering the last.”*

*Clausewitz On War pg 584<sup>1</sup>*

To be effective U.S. military leaders must be keenly aware of the political atmosphere within which national security strategy (NSS) policy decisions are made. However short-term political policy decisions should not be incorporated into military doctrine that is designed to provide tailored military options as policy options evolve. In the mid 1990s, in reaction to a cascade of small-scale contingencies and diminishing political capital, the Clinton administration adopted a policy of “exit strategy,” setting a specific deadline for terminating U.S. involvement, to address national concerns of U.S. military interventions. Exhibiting a similar uneasiness with small-scale contingencies and without definition or amplification, the military incorporated the term “exit strategy” into its joint doctrine as a “bumper sticker” for classical war termination theory<sup>2</sup>. The U.S. government, and military, has historically been more comfortable with conducting an intervention than it has been with the mechanics of ending one. “Exit strategy” provided a simple and elegant phrase to simplify the very complex, murky, and intricate human enterprise of conflict and conflict termination.

Circumstances of the current war in Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), have resurfaced the concept of “exit strategy” in public and private debates of NSS options and the proper use of the U.S. military in a post cold war uni-polar world. What “exit strategy” means today depends on who is evoking it and for what purpose. Originally

manifested in the business world, “exit strategy” proponents attempt to apply rigid scientific models of cost-benefit analysis to the all too human iterative process of foreign diplomacy and domestic politics. The differences being that in business, or personal matters, once a predetermined threshold is reached one can always move on to some new endeavor. In diplomacy or foreign affairs, especially in a global economy, governments are more or less stuck with one another. When the U.S. military adopted “exit strategy” without definition it caused confusion in military planning cells as to the overall objective of military strategy formulation as “exit strategy” was often interchanged with the more explicit concept of “end state.” For the Clinton administration, which is given credit for developing “exit strategy” in NSS terms, it was a policy option that utilized an explicit deadline to define how much national treasure, time and effort the nation was willing to expend on a military intervention. To fully understand the concept of “exit strategy” in NSS terms, an examination of the terms evolution within the Clinton administration and subsequent adoption into military joint doctrine is required.

## *Background*

With the end of the cold war and no longer armed with a strategy of containment as an organizing NSS concept, Democrats, Republicans, Department of State, Department of Defense, and academic institutions alike struggled to define the nature of U.S. involvement in the world at large. Having won the great confrontation between communism and democracy, what was left were the more abstract or amorphous political purposes that are infinitely more difficult to articulate in a simple, clear, and concise manner so as to be broadly understood, and accepted, by the majority of the electorate.<sup>3</sup> This lack of clarity and specificity made it infinitely more difficult to promulgate a Political-Military<sup>4</sup> plan to support a NSS by which the government would address stated purposes or desired national strategic end-states. To address this problem, and in light of the minimal political capital the administration had in regards to foreign policy and the use of military force, the Clinton administration began using what it termed an “exit strategy,” predicated on explicit deadlines, to help explain how it intended to address foreign interventions codified in terms that were deemed easily understandable and acceptable to the American public. However, a common definition or agreed upon understanding of “exit strategy” was never officially developed or defined within the NSS framework.<sup>5</sup> This lack of definition resulted in various understandings and frames of reference within the U.S government, military and civilian population causing continued confusion among the very participants tasked with formulating and implementing U.S. national security policy. Exactly what were the objectives of each intervention? Was the predetermined departure date the principle objective or were there specific goals that had to be achieved? Did these goals have to endure or would it

simply be nice if they could be achieved? What would be the resources available if the objective was the set timeframe instead of specific goals? What were the military priorities? Was absolute force protection an overriding concern or was there enough support to sustain casualties in the course of achieving specific goals? What was the nation willing to risk in order to attain the desired political outcome?

In the realm of politics, diplomacy, national security and military operations, words matter. They delineate agreed upon expectations and shared levels of understanding. They express value judgments, levels of commitment, emotional underpinnings, cultural expectations, hopes and fears. Precise definitions are the hallmark of critical human interaction and are essential to those who formulate, negotiate, implement, and teach national security strategy. For example, Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), as a nuclear deterrent strategy, spoke volumes about the perceived implications of a nuclear exchange. Not only did it define the strategy, that both sides would have sufficient nuclear weapons capability to absorb a first strike, but also to ensure the total destruction of the adversary in a retaliatory strike. It provided the emotional value judgment that anyone bent on using nuclear weapons would have to be absolutely insane or “mad.” That waging a nuclear war was widely viewed as inconceivable on either side, lent credence to the belief that a nuclear attack, regardless of scale, was not an option, and thus MAD as a deterrent strategy, was deemed by many to be effective. Since all who were involved understood the premise of MAD, irrespective of their agreement with its merits, it ensured that none could mistake it for something it was not. To be clear though, MAD was not adopted as official military doctrine and did not constrain military planning options. It was in fact a policy option, one of many, that

provided the parameters of official administration discussions and frames of reference.

MAD contained the additional critical benefit of being able to very effectively communicate an extremely complicated and emotional NSS subject.

Likewise, in the early part of the 1990's another term, "exit strategy", was brought into our NSS lexicon by the Clinton administration as their way to deal with the confluence of foreign policy and domestic political realities. "Exit strategy" carried with it all of the value judgments, prejudices, political leanings, and beliefs, depending on who is invoking it, surrounding America's proper role in a post cold war world and the use of force. The term "exit strategy" is prevalent in congressional testimony, speeches, and policy documents outlining foreign policy decisions as a way to explain how the government has learned from, and will not repeat, perceived past mistakes. Pundits have used it to evaluate the merits of various military operations and political policy decisions depending upon the inherent beliefs of the author or institution. Either the policy lacks the fortitude to succeed because the "exit" has already been planned before an intervention has begun, or it is flawed because it does not have an explicit termination point or understanding of how the intervention is to be ended. The reverse is also held to be true. The policy is good precisely because the "exit", or end date, is planned out in advance with all the risks and benefits identified beforehand, or it is good because interventions are a human and iterative process making the determination of a precise end point or "exit" impossible to determine. This logic makes use of and confuses two key strategic ideas; first, is the belief that if you plan long and hard enough you can anticipate all of your adversaries counter moves, ensuring your ability to impose your will upon him with such scientific precision as to be able to establish a specific time table against which



to measure success and guard against mission creep. What it does not account for is the truism that a plan is only good until it meets first contact with the enemy, that is, the adversary gets a vote. Interventions and war are a human and iterative process consisting of more art than science and no plan can be executed with a scientifically precise accounting of cause and effect. The second key idea was paraphrased from the Clausewitzian axiom cited at the beginning of this chapter that, “no one should consider a war without first considering its end.” Very sage advice, but consideration does not mean a policy should not change or evolve should the circumstances change. It does however provide for some awareness as to what objectives are desirable to be achieved by the action and at what proposed cost. Formulating and articulating an endstate helps focus the policy and guide its implementation. Keeping these two points in mind as events play out should guard against over reaching or exceeding the “culminating point of victory.”<sup>6</sup> To underscore the scope of the debate, even the military formally adopted the concept of ‘exit strategy’ within its joint doctrine.

Military joint doctrine guides how operations should be designed and executed and recommends the appropriate relationships between the military and its civilian leadership. Doctrine is used in the curriculum at the military war colleges and civilian universities to teach students about these same subjects. It is also used by senior military leaders to guide their actions in war by providing a common baseline of understanding as to the best or agreed upon method of conducting operations. While doctrine is directive in nature, every commander is advised to use common sense in applying it to his or her unique situation. In most cases, the very definition of “exit strategy” is assumed known and understood by all. As Senator John McCain stated in 1994 during testimony by

General Shalikashvili, the newly appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “As you know General, we never get into something without an exit strategy...”<sup>7</sup> Yet at that time, the term “exit strategy” or the use of a deadline had never been a part of formal doctrine in the history of the United States. To be fair, Senator McCain, having been a naval officer, knew very well the military planning process and the concept of “endstate.” One can only infer that he was alluding to the military propensity to have a plan for everything. Even today, after being sprinkled throughout Joint doctrine, nowhere is it defined or expounded upon. Military leadership is advised to make sure they account for an “exit strategy” but they are never told what it is or how to go about formulating one. This is exceedingly unusual in Joint doctrine where almost every new term is defined either in the Joint dictionary (JP 1-02) or encapsulated within the adjoining text.

While not on the same strategic level as MAD, and its implications for misunderstanding falling well short of that of a nuclear exchange, the term “exit strategy” has accumulated a track record threaded through most major NSS discussions since its formal introduction in 1993.<sup>8</sup> Far from being a military strategy, “exit strategy” or the use of a deadline, is but one policy option among many that any administration has available to it. The use of a deadline is a political calculation based upon perceived or real political capital and the national will to engage in a foreign intervention. This distinction is critical to avoiding strategic confusion between the political “ends” and the national “ways and means” of achieving those “ends.”

## ***Genesis of “Exit Strategy”***

### *1993, The first “100 days” and Somalia*

In 1992 Governor William Jefferson Clinton was elected the 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States for what many believed to be principally economic reasons. James Caravel’s now famous quote, “It’s the economy stupid,” defined many post election commentaries. The defeated George H.W. Bush had overseen the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, won the Gulf War, steered the nation clear of the “quagmire” of Bosnia, but was seen to have failed to tend to the US economy, which was in the midst of a recession. With the fall of the Soviet Union many joyously proclaimed the “end of history” and looked forward to spending the “peace dividend” on long delayed programs within the United States. The defense budget could be cut, the standing military reduced, forward deployed forces in Europe and Asia cut deeply or brought home, and the world was ripe for democracy. What was not fully anticipated was that once the strictures of the Cold War were removed, long simmering feuds would rapidly boil to the surface increasing global instability just as advances in technology were about to unleash the information age and accelerate globalization on an exponential scale. President-elect Clinton exemplified the new post cold war generation and the passing of the torch from one era to another. He was youthful, charismatic, highly intelligent, articulate, and fluid in a crowd. Yet he lacked foreign policy experience having been the governor of the relatively small state of Arkansas and had avoided the Vietnam War studying in Oxford England. He was the polar opposite of President Bush who came from a prominent family, had fought in WWII, been Director of the CIA, and spent the last 12 years as Vice President and then President. While there was a hopeful

air to the beginning of Clinton's administration, he lacked the political capital when it came to foreign policy or interventions where the use of the military might be required. However that did not mean he did not possess ambitions in the foreign arena. It did mean he would have to face a congress that was chocked full of senior statesmen sensitive to the "lessons" of Vietnam, and a military that had fully embraced the Weinberger and subsequent Powell "doctrine" on the use of force.<sup>9</sup> Many had come to view this doctrine as the standard by which all foreign military interventions should be judged. There also existed and overriding belief that vital national interest must be at stake to justify any use of force.

### Powell Doctrine

(Sometimes referred to as the Powell corollary to the Weinberger Doctrine)

1. Is the political objective we seek to achieve important, clearly defined and understood?
2. Have all other nonviolent policy means failed?
3. Will military force achieve the objective?
4. At what cost?
5. Have the gains and risks been analyzed?
6. How might the situation that we seek to alter, once it is altered by force, develop further and what might be the consequences?

Of particular note, there is no mention of the term "exit strategy", timeline, or a definitive termination point, for which the Powell doctrine has been accused of supporting.<sup>10</sup>

While item six speaks to consideration of what to do following military operations, it must be remembered that General Powell presented this short list as questions to be addressed, and not a scientific checklist to be blindly followed.<sup>11</sup>

During the Presidential campaign, candidate Clinton derided the Bush administration for: (1) its lack of conviction in regards to the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina, (2) saw a disparity in US policy toward treatment of refugees fleeing Cuba

and those fleeing Haiti, and (3) disagreed with the exclusion of homosexuals from service in the military.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, between the election and inauguration US involvement in Somalia was undertaken in consultation with, and agreement by, the President elect.

These four issues would evolve and coalesce to define in large part the next eight years of the Clinton Presidency where foreign policy and military intervention was concerned.

The “gays in the military” issue was not an important or definitive NSS issue in and of itself. The fact that it was undertaken within the first months of taking office, and the President's first action in regards to the military, served to erode the President's limited credibility in military affairs. If there was a gulf in understanding between the military and their new commander-in-chief, this action made it much more difficult to bridge. The resultant “don't ask, don't tell” policy amounted to a compromise that allowed the administration to get beyond the issue placating both their constituency and their detractors. The issue is only mentioned here because it rarify the atmosphere at the beginning of the administration thus making efforts to gain the support of the congress, the military, and the American public for foreign involvements that much more difficult. The timing of the issue was more detrimental then the issue itself. On hindsight, had the administration foreseen the impending cascade of instability and violent actions around the globe, they might have chosen a more fortuitous time to undertake such a radical change.

By mid spring of 1993, the mass starvation in Somalia had been arrested and the operation was being transitioned to the United Nations. Discussions migrated from stemming the mass starvation to how to make Somalia a viable state. This evolution into nation building, for a multitude of reasons, culminated for the United States on October 3,

1993, in what became known as the Battle of Mogadishu or more famously “Blackhawk Down.”<sup>13</sup> Debate surrounding the role of the United States in world affairs, participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, what constituted “vital national interests,” use of force, mission creep, nation building, casualty aversion, CNN effect, and the ghost of the Vietnam “quagmire” exploded within the NSS arena. The administration struggled with the confines of the “Powell doctrine” and the need to act on the world stage. The world had become pocked with failed states, humanitarian disasters, and ethnic conflicts that were perceived to fall short of the “vital national interests” historically used to justify military interventions. Within six months, U.S. troops were withdrawn from Somalia due to a lack of political capital and the absence of a clearly defined and publicly supported policy. The U.S. was not willing to retake the lead in Somalia nor was it willing to continue following the UN.

In May of 1994 the administration released Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD), the Clinton administration’s policy on reforming multilateral peace operations. The goal of PDD 25 was to provide some coherence to the decision making process within the interagency, outline the preference of the administration to intervene earlier to preempt a situation from deteriorating too far thus requiring mass resources, and to assuage critics that the administration understood the use of force and would not commit forces to open ended entanglements. PDD 25 outlined seven principle areas of concern:

1. Making disciplined and coherent choices about which peace operations to support—both when we vote in the Security Council for UN peace operations and when we participate in such operations with U.S. troops.
2. ***The role of U.S. forces is tied to clear objectives and an endpoint for U.S. participation can be identified***<sup>14</sup>
3. Reducing U.S. costs for UN peace operations, both the percentage our nation pays for each operation and the cost of the operations themselves. (from 31.7% to 25% by 1996)

4. Defining clearly our policy regarding the command and control of American military forces in UN peace operations.
5. Reforming and improving the UN's capability to manage peace operations
6. Improving the way the U.S. government manages and funds peace operations.
7. Creating better forms of cooperation between the Executive, the Congress and the American Public on peace operations.

Since his inauguration, the President had been discussing the limitations of peacekeeping. In pointing out the UN's inability to become involved in all of the world's conflicts, the President, addressing the General Assembly in 1993, stressed the need to subject all proposals for new peacekeeping operations to "the rigors of military and political analysis." To that end, he stated, in evaluating proposals for new peacekeeping missions, the United States had begun asking, and the UN should ask, "Is there a real threat to international peace? Does the proposed mission have clear objectives? Can an *end point* be identified for those who will be asked to participate?"<sup>15</sup> Secretary of State Warren Christopher, during his testimony in front of the Senate appropriations committee on April 27, 1993, outlined his personal tests for advocating the use of force: are we able to state the goal for which force is going to be used in a clear and understandable way to the American people? Is there a strong likelihood that we can be successful in the use of force? Is there an exit strategy? Do we know how we're going to get out of the situation? Is it a program that will sustain the support of the America people? In response Senator Hollings commented to the effect that the Somalia situation did not meet any of the five tests Secretary Christopher had outlined.<sup>16</sup> This exchange began tacit acknowledgement that in order to garner support for getting into an intervention, it first had to be determined how and more importantly when we were getting out. Trying

to explain nefarious end-states in clear precise terminology that is easily understood by the general public not steeped in foreign policy or national security strategy is exceedingly difficult. Stating that the operation would be completed and the troops home by a set date was to be tangible evidence that an operation would not turn into a quagmire and in fact the exit, or light at the end of the tunnel, was in sight from the outset. Whether the deadline would work or not, one only has to review the success or failure of UN mandates that incorporate deadlines. These deadlines are often used to garner permission for the use of foreign troops in support of UN operations.



## *1994, Haiti*

As U.S. troops were withdrawing from the beaches of Mogadishu, the administration was faced with another simmering crisis that was coming to a boil in its own back yard. Haiti was a poor tiny island country living under a military junta that had ousted the democratically elected president Jean Bertrand Aristide in September 1991, within nine months of his assuming office. The Bush administration had coordinated sanctions that were implemented under the auspices of the Organization of American States but was unwilling to undertake a military intervention, as the situation in Haiti was not deemed of vital national interest. The sanctions designed to punish the ruling junta and force them from power, also crippled an already failing economy and made the poor that much more destitute. They had little impact on the wealthy that continued to benefit from black market operations and holes in the voluntary sanctions. The poor economic conditions, in turn, created a flow of refugees that sailed the short distance to the United States and, thus created a highly visible public response. It also brought to light the paradox in US policy reference the refugees from Cuba verses those from Haiti. If Cuban refugees, fleeing the repressive Castro regime, could reach American soil they would normally be granted exile. If intercepted at sea, in international waters, they would be returned to Cuba. On the other hand, US policy toward Haitian refugees was to return them to Haiti, regardless of where they were intercepted. Candidate Clinton had used this paradox to beat up on the Bush administration for failing to be strong on Haiti and inconsistent on human rights, promising to change the policy, if elected. However, prior to being inaugurated the President elect reversed his position when it became clear that the anticipated change in policy, without addressing the root cause, would lead to a larger

flood of refugees seeking asylum. In early 1993 the President-elect was not ready to intervene militarily.

In the summer of 1993 the administration, having worked through the UN and negotiated with the junta for the introduction of a UN force to oversee the implementation of the Governors Island agreement, thought it finally had the situation in hand. This agreement called for the installation of a new Prime Minister chosen by Aristide, the suspension of sanctions, deployment of UN personnel to help in “modernizing” the Haitian armed forces, amnesty for the coup leaders as ratified by the parliament, creation of a new police force, the juntas resignation, and Aristide’s return to Haiti by October 30, 1993.<sup>17</sup> When the UN advance force arrived in Port au Prince on October 11, 1993, aboard the *USS Harlen County*, it was prevented from docking by an angry Haitian mob. The next day, the *USS Harlen County* withdrew and the Governors Island agreement collapsed. Having reversed its campaign promise on Haitian refugee policy, unceremoniously withdrawn from Somalia, and now being humiliated by a weak, impoverished island country, the administration was at rock bottom in foreign affairs and desperately needed a victory. The genocide in Rwanda, and the failure of the U.S. to react, occurred six months later in April 1994.

In the midst of developing a post cold war NSS espousing the tenants of engagement and enlargement, focused on the promotion of democratic values, free trade, and collective security via regional and global institutions, the administration was caught in the middle of the debate between vital national interests and its post cold war vision. Compound the issue with the image of the world’s sole superpower not being able to maintain stability in its own hemisphere; the pressure to act became intense. On

September 19, 1994 following the failure of increased sanctions and the freezing of assets to get the junta to leave, the administration launched Operation Uphold Democracy, the airborne invasion of Haiti. With the assault force en route, the military junta finally concluded that its time was up and agreed to depart. What was to be a forced entry invasion was transformed into an unopposed insertion of forces to secure the capital, major ports, and provide policing functions for the populous. In short order, Aristide was returned to Haiti and the operation quickly fell under the auspices of United Nations. As called for in PDD 25, specific goals were identified: creating a stable environment to allow for economic activity, conduct new elections, establish a new Haitian police force, and the passage of Pre-Lenten "Carnival" festival. Based upon these required events, a timeline was established and a date specified for the withdrawal of American forces. The majority of US combat forces would return within a few months with the complete transition to the UN taking place no later than February 26, 1996. Issues surrounding the implementation of this strategy will be discussed later in this paper. With an exit date set, any fears of mission creep, quagmire, or nation building were deemed alleviated. American and UN actions removed the overt causes of the crisis and reset the Haitian playing field to the pre-coup status quo. That history might demonstrate the same grinding poverty, corruption, and lack of economic activity would necessitate several more small-scale interventions was not of immediate concern. Since the intervention followed the policy guidelines outlined in PDD 25 and US actions were coordinated and in concert with the UN, the US led intervention was deemed a success.

## ***1994, Rwanda***

*“(Rwanda) sits as the saddest moment, in retrospect, of my time in the Clinton administration.”*

*- Anthony Lake, National Security Advisor*

Concurrent with the ending of the US intervention in Somalia and the increase in attention on Haiti, genocide began in Rwanda on April 6, 1994 resulting in the deaths of an estimated 800,000 people in the first 100 days (roughly ten percent of the Rwandan population). The United States failed to act outside the context of the UN, and in fact, supported the withdrawal of 90 percent of the UN forces from the country. Both former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and US Ambassador to the UN, Madeline Albright, admit that events in Rwanda never surfaced full force at the senior levels of the administration. They acknowledge that they were aware that something was going on but failed to ask the tough questions that might have uncovered the full extent of the horror. Key to understanding the development of foreign policy is the political climate of the time. In a 2003 PBS Frontline interview about Rwanda, former National Security advisor Anthony Lake commented, “I think it didn't arise for us because it was almost literally inconceivable that American troops would go to Rwanda. Our sin, I believe, was not the error of commission, or taking a look at this issue and then saying no. It was an error of omission -- of never considering that issue. I would think, especially in the wake of Somalia, that there was no chance that the Congress would ever have authorized funds to send American troops into Rwanda. Indeed, we were struggling to get the funds for our relief operations.” Former Secretary of State Madeline Albright had a very similar impression, “...The Somalia issue, in our own case....nothing would have happened. ... There was no way to get a large number of troops there quickly enough and to get the

right mandate. It sits as the greatest regret that I have from the time I was U.N. ambassador and maybe even as secretary of state, because it is a huge tragedy, and something that sits very heavy on all our souls, I think.”<sup>18</sup>

By the comments of the National Security Advisor and Secretary of State it is clear that the administration believed it was out of sufficient political capital to act outside the bounds of traditional vital national interests, where only moral imperatives were at stake. At the time PDD 25 was in draft format and would not be released until one month after the genocide began. It is not a far stretch to believe that the National Security Council staff, and those below the principals committee, also understood that there was no political will to take on the Rwanda issue. Thus, it never bubbled up as an issue requiring further debate. The question of why Haiti was worthy of consideration over Rwanda can be answered simply, in purely political terms, as proximity. Haiti was in the western hemisphere, Haitian refugees were landing on American shores making it a political issue for both parties, and it was close enough to be deemed “doable” and at minimal cost.

## ***1995, Bosnia***

*“The position of leader of the Free World is vacant.”*

*-Jacques Chirac, President of France, 1995*

By January 1995, military action in Bosnia was in a winter lull that also coincided with a negotiated four-month cease-fire. 1995 would prove to be a watershed year not only for Bosnia but also for the administrations foreign policy. In 1992, candidate Clinton had advocated for a more forceful Bosnia policy calling for NATO air strikes to counter Serb aggressions. Upon taking office, this desire for action ran full force into three realities: first, Clinton had promised to focus on the economy and any broader involvement in Bosnia would drain resources from government coffers; second, neither the US Congress, nor the American people were in any mood to commit US troops to an area that was deemed essentially a European affair; and third, the other NATO countries were not anxious to immerse themselves any deeper into the conflict than they had to as they were still in the midst of determining the new role for the alliance after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

On February 10,1993, Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced the administration’s policy with regards to Bosnia was “premised on *not* deploying U.S. troops to Bosnia under any circumstances other than to help enforce a peace agreement negotiated and agreed to by the parties.”<sup>19</sup> This policy was the result of a Presidential Review Directive (PRD) initiated at the beginning of the administration concerning Bosnia. Over time, US policy shifted from simply hoping to contain and limit the crisis to a more assertive policy predicated on the use of UN or NATO ground forces backed up

with US air power. Without recounting the entire history of events, by the winter of 1994, the UN, NATO, and the US were caught in a conundrum. Or as Secretary Christopher is credited with calling it, “The situation from Hell.” The UN had authorized and deployed a peacekeeping force comprised principally of NATO member states to protect designated safe zones (Bihac, Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Gorazde, Zepa to name a few). Earlier that year when NATO conducted limited air strikes against Serb ammunition dumps following a Serb violation of a heavy weapons exclusion zone, Serb forces seized several hundred UN peacekeepers as hostages. Ostensibly, the Serbs did not distinguish between UN peacekeeper, as supplied by NATO, and NATO air strikes as being separate and distinct. According to the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, the air strikes were an act of war and therefore the “peacekeepers” were now the enemy and taken as prisoners of war. Regardless, all sides now understood the reality on the ground. With air power effectively countered and the unwillingness of the administration to put American troops on the ground, any leverage the US may have had was gone. Additionally, the UN had to either reinforce the peacekeepers with sufficient numbers to protect themselves or withdraw completely. Neither option was a good one. To reinforce required an answer to the question, “to do what?” More forces to protect the existing force without the use of air power meant more potential hostages. It also brought about the harder question of how to get them in. The counter argument was that in order to fly them in, Serb anti-aircraft systems would have to be destroyed. If you had to drop bombs anyway, why not on the Serb forces surrounding the enclave you were trying to protect by inserting the new forces to begin with? If you did that, then the UN forces elsewhere would once again be at increased risk. To withdraw was an even less pleasant option. To

withdraw would mean to admit failure, failure of the UN to protect those in need, failure of NATO as the most successful alliance since WWII, and failure of the US as the sole remaining superpower. It would also require the insertion of some 80,000 ground troops, 25,000 of which would come from the US, to consolidate, protect, and remove the 24,000 troops currently on the ground (OPLAN 40104). The deployment of U.S. troops would require congressional approval, risk mass casualties, and had the potential to draw the U.S. further into the conflict according to the law of unintended consequences. All of which were not without significant political cost, and the next US Presidential election cycle would begin in about a year.

In the spring of 1995, following the end of the ceasefire, the fighting resumed. Croatian and Bosnian-Muslim forces went on the offensive in the west while the Bosnian Serbs sought to eliminate the few remaining Muslim enclaves in the east. The massacre in Srebrenica in June of 1995 (est. 8000 killed) proved not only to be the low point of UN and NATO involvement but also the catalyst that provided the US the impetus to seize the initiative.<sup>20</sup> Against this backdrop of events, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake brought together his close advisors related to Bosnia and sought to step back from the day-to-day crisis and try and see the situation as a whole and not its individual parts. Several previous attempts at policy review by the principals committee (DoS, DoD, NSA, UN Amb, CJCS, CIA) ended in the status quo thereby seemingly to admit the situation was just too hard. One of the first NSC papers of 1995 outlined four options:

1. Status Quo. The United States should focus on containing the conflict and mitigate its humanitarian consequences, continue to support the Bosnian Muslims, and proceed with diplomatic efforts.



2. Active Containment. Recognizing the realities on the ground, the United States should adopt a neutral stance on the terms of any settlement, and end or suspend further Contact Group activities
3. A Quarantine of the Bosnian Serbs. The border between Bosnia and Serbia should be sealed to cut off all supplies--military, economic, and humanitarian--to the Bosnian Serbs.
4. Lift, Arm, Train, and Strike. Following withdrawal of UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the arms embargo should be lifted, Muslim forces armed and trained, and air strikes conducted during the transition period to ensure the Bosnian Serbs would not exploit any interim military advantage.

Not surprising, each of these four options were supported by different entities within the government. The State Department favored option 1, the Pentagon option 2, Leon Fuerth, chairman of the interagency sanctions task force option 3, and Anthony Lake and Madeline Albright nominally supported option 4.<sup>21</sup> Lake's "Blue Skies" approach was to project six months out and determine what the US would like to have the situation look like by then, the "endgame," and work the timeline backwards to the actions required to get there. In military terms, this is called regression planning. The endgame, as seen by the end of six months, was the cessation of hostilities and recognition of a single Bosnian entity with two partitions along the 51/49 split as advocated by the Contact group. This was to be achieved by one of two means. First, extensive diplomatic efforts with full U.S. involvement offering a series of carrots and sticks, and second, if diplomacy failed, the withdrawal of UNPROFOR, lifting of the arms embargo, training of the Bosnian Muslim force, and NATO air strikes to offset any near-term military advantage the Serbs might have had. Over the course of the next month or two, discussions evolved at various levels and concluded with the presentation of distinct options as advocated by the four principle stakeholders, Albright, Christopher, Perry, and Lake. Christopher and Perry offered minor variations on the status quo with an overwhelming preference for

keeping it a European issue. Albright advocated for a significant enlargement to U.S. involvement--essentially taking ownership of the Bosnia issue. For her, nothing less than U.S. credibility in Foreign Policy was at stake. If Albright's proposal provided the skeleton framework for why the U.S. policy should change, Lake's NSC proposal hung the meat on the skeleton and provided the how. With the campaign season only months away and the situation in Bosnia at a crossroads, the President needed to make a decision. Anthony Lake's endgame strategy was endorsed and U.S. policy toward Bosnia was dramatically changed.

In short, the new policy worked. By December 1995, the warring sides were in Dayton Ohio hammering out a peace accord; led by the efforts of U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke. With the fighting ceased, official Washington and the administration turned to the beginning of the Presidential campaign season and left Holbrooke to work out the details. This set the stage for the next interagency battle over ends, ways and means, and the invocation of exit strategy deadlines in a doctrinal sense. The exit strategy deadline accomplished two things according to Lake: first, it allowed the U.S. to get American forces into Bosnia with the support of the Congress and American people. Second, it forced the U.S. government to focus on the end state and what was achievable.<sup>22</sup> That direct involvement of American ground forces was required to secure continued UN and NATO support to the process was of critical importance. Direct American leadership demonstrated to the Croats, Bosnian-Muslims, and Serbs that they would no longer be left to their own devices and it was time to negotiate for a long-term solution. The exit strategy allowed the administration to get into Bosnia; what they could accomplish only time would tell.

The debate over the merits of a deadline took the form of “Maximalists” verses “Minimalists.”<sup>23</sup> Holbrooke’s maximalists were those who believed if you were going to spend the effort and resources to enforce a peace, you ought to then commit to spending the resources to ensure it endured. To do otherwise would irresponsibly leave the outcome to chance and cause the initial effort to have been in vain. The minimalist on the other hand would contend that we do not have the resources or the responsibility to rebuild nations. Once we provide the breathing space and opportunity to seek a better outcome, it is the responsibility of the countries in question to choose which path they follow.<sup>24</sup> While Holbrooke secured a “Maximalist” peace agreement in the form of the Dayton accords, the implementation of those accords followed the “Minimalist” preference. The historical verdict on this debate resides in the fact that ten years later, U.S troops are still on the ground in Bosnia but peace has generally held, the intervening war in Kosovo notwithstanding.

## ***Joint Military Doctrine***

*“We must admit that wherever it would be too laborious to determine the facts of the situation, we must have recourse to the relevant principles established by theory. But in the same way as in war these truths are better served by a commander who has absorbed their meaning in his mind rather than one who treats them as rigid external rules, so the critic should not apply them like an external law or an algebraic formula whose relevance need not be established each time it is used.”*

*Clausewitz On War pg 168*

A review of joint doctrine publications from current drafts back to 1995 reveal little on the subject of exit strategy short of saying one is required or that it is a critical component of a campaign plan or end state. JP 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, does not define the term. Nor do any of the other publications provide information about how to devise an exit strategy, what its critical components might be, or offer any advice on who should be involved in determining its key functions.<sup>25</sup> This seems illogical since JP 5-0 goes to great lengths to define the military planning process complete with operational phases (see figure xxx), definitions, checklists, and component responsibilities. It provides explicit definitions of “end state,” to the point of differentiating national strategic end state<sup>26</sup> from military end state<sup>27</sup> and explaining that these end states “constitute success, failure, mission termination, or *exit strategy...*”(my emphasis).<sup>28</sup> Within these end states exist objectives that when combined provide the details of their particular end state. Completing the rational process of campaign planning as outlined in joint doctrine provides a coherent and complete strategy for executing the military portion of an intervention. It provides a starting point and an end point along with a methodology to get from one to the other. However, it is only a point of departure and doctrine provides for an iterative process to account for a change based upon the realities as they develop during execution. But what is it that links the

overall strategy for mission execution to an “exit strategy”? Are military forces, once combat operations are complete, supposed to exit? Some have misconstrued the primary mission of the U.S. military, “to fight and win the nations wars,” to mean that once it is determined to go to war, the military should be given free reign in developing and executing the strategy. Further, once the war is concluded, as determined by the military, the operation will be handed back over to the State department to do the “nation building.” As Eliot Cohn might postulate, this thinking falls well within his “normal theory” of Civil-Military relations.<sup>29</sup> By doctrine however, military forces are supposed to be prepared to transition to “post hostility operations,” “post conflict operations,” or “stability and reconstruction operations.” These three terms are listed in order as they appear in successive volumes of JP 5-0 to describe Phase IV operations. The fact that so much time is spent debating the merits of “levels of war,” operational phasing, titles of paragraphs, or even the placement of specific paragraphs within a particular publication lends validity to the assertion that including “exit strategy” without definition defies a logical process. Presumably, upon the successful completion of Phase IV operations formal redeployment begins and the military portion of the intervention is concluded. Is the traditional function of redeploying forces now an “exit strategy” according to doctrine?

JP 1-02, as amended through 31 August 2005, states under its criteria for defining terms (pg ii) that there must be “Inadequate coverage in a standard, commonly accepted dictionary, e.g., by Merriam-Webster.” A term may also not require explicit definition if there is assumed to be such a common understanding of the term as to not require further definition. In the case of “exit strategy” an acceptable dictionary defines both terms individually but not in combination. While no source could be found to document

discussions surrounding the inclusion of “exit strategy” into joint doctrine, the fact that it was adopted without definition would require that the meaning of their combination be assumed to be self-evident. Merriam-Webster online dictionary<sup>30</sup> defines the two terms as: Exit: to go out or away, and Strategy: (1): the science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation or group of nations to afford the maximum support to adopted policies in peace or war (2): the science and art of military command exercised to meet the enemy in combat under advantageous conditions (2 a): a careful plan or method: a clever stratagem (2b): the art of devising or employing plans or stratagems toward a goal. Combining these two definitions in their simplest forms (strategy 2a) might result in the common sense idea of having a “careful plan or method to depart.” In standard military parlance this is termed a redeployment plan, which naturally follows the successful completion of a military operation. There already exists historical examples and detailed guidance on how to build and execute just such a plan. However; it could also mean that it is advisable to have a rapid extraction plan on the shelf in case things go really bad and the decision is made to “pull the plug.” An informal survey of senior military officers as to what they thought “exit strategy” meant resulted in a unanimous, “*When are we getting the heck out of Dodge.*” None of their responses alluded to mission completion or success. Again, in military parlance this is termed a contingency plan and would be a natural “branch” developed during the “branches and sequels” portion of the iterative planning process. Branches and sequels are options developed in anticipation of potential, most likely and least likely; enemy actions in response to ones own actions. When “exit” is combined with other definitions of strategy then “exit strategy” truly begins to lose its clarity. To have a strategy that

affords “the maximum support to adopted policies in peace *or* war” assumes a transition or flow between peace and war and at least some level of coherency. It also advocates for supporting combinations (science and art) of all the levers of national power, political, economic, psychological, and military.<sup>31</sup> In this case, there is no true “exit” but a change in circumstances requiring differing levels of participation from the levers of national power. However, if the adopted policy is of limited ends, limited means, and limited will to assume risk, then a strategy based upon time or general events rather than effect, could be highly effective. How and when to differentiate these alternate definitions is the essence of political decision-making and should not to be confused with operational art or operational design (military strategy formulation). The same word game logic could have been applied to the term “end state,” yet doctrinally it was decided to go to great lengths to define and expound on the proper understanding of the term. This care in succinctly defining the meaning of “end state” befits the critical role that understanding the objectives of an intervention plays in being able to properly devise a strategy to achieve success.

The following case study is a good example of how very smart, well-intentioned military planners derived what they believed to be new “exit strategy” reality requiring doctrinal inclusion. It is a synopsis of an article appearing in *Parameters*, US Army War College Quarterly-Autumn 1996 titled “Declaring Victory: Planning Exit Strategies for Peace Operations”.<sup>32</sup> It is instructive that Sen. George Aiken, R-Vt offered to Presidents Johnson and Nixon that in regards to Vietnam, we should “declare victory and go home.”

## *Operation Uphold Democracy, Haiti*

How to differentiate “exit strategy” from traditional conventions of “end state,” in the absence of guidance, is what the planners of U.S. Forces Haiti (USFORHAITI) felt they had to determine, in the fall of 1995, in anticipation of their mandated departure of 29 February 1996. They had to do this because they felt compelled to have an exit strategy. “While FM 100-23, Peace Operations, mentions “transition to end state” as a planning consideration, our careful review of doctrine produced no information on how to develop and exit strategy for a specific operation.” What was available to the planners was PDD 25, “U.S. Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations, 3 May 1994” which among other things clearly demonstrated the administrations preference for more selective and effective participation in UN peacekeeping operations and increased sensitivity toward the use of U.S. military forces. Of the nine considerations outlined in PDD 25, the following provided the clearest link to the concept of “exit strategy.”

*The role of U.S. forces is tied to clear objectives and an **endpoint** for U.S. participation can be identified (my emphasis)*

With a lack of doctrinal guidance and a firm departure date, the staff devised their own generic definition of “exit strategy,” “the planned transition to the host nation(s) of all functions performed on its (their) behalf by peace operations forces.” This definition was then modified for USFORHAITI by replacing the “host nations” with government of Haiti and “peace operations forces” with U.S. Joint Task Force (JTF). This process then came full circle with the JTF and UNMIH taking this “exit strategy” along with the UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR), to derive the council’s intent when authorizing the intervention, and reformulated supporting Mission and Intent statements.



Unbeknownst to the USOFRHAITI planners, the US planners working in support of the UN mission were undertaking the same process and seemingly derived similar conclusions.

UNMIH ( Spell out—here or above)

*Mission:* Under the operational control of the United Nations Mission in Haiti, UN forces maintain a secure and stable environment and conduct a peaceful transition of responsibility to the government of Haiti no later than 29 February 1996, in accordance with UNSCRs 940, 975, and 1007.

*Intent:* The purpose of this mission is to maintain a secure and stable environment, which allows the government of Haiti to maintain functional governance, gradually transferring responsibility for the secure and stable environment to the government of Haiti. The end state is defined as the secure and stable environment that allows social and economic development, free elections, and peaceful transition of responsibility to the government of Haiti.

USFORHAITI

*Mission:* JTF Dragoon [the US Army's 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment plus attached units and individuals] transfers responsibility for the maintenance of a secure and stable environment in Haiti to the government of Haiti no later than 29 February 1996, in order to fulfill UNSCRs 940/975/1007.

*Intent:* The purpose of the operation is to divest Zone V of all operations in support of the government of Haiti. *We will accomplish this purpose through progressively transferring all support operations to the government of Haiti, setting time limits on continued support to encourage timely transfers.* Maintain only enough presence to detect an impending loss of security or stability in sufficient time to counteract it. At the end of the operation the government of Haiti assumes all responsibility for maintaining the secure and stable environment. Zone V forces are postured to facilitate and cover the withdrawal of UN forces and protect key installations. *(my emphasis)*

From the mission statement and expanded intent the following Courses of Action (COA) were derived as possible strategies for executing the mission. These would be briefed to the force commander with one being recommended over the others. Ultimately the force

commander would decide and then provide the same up the chain for formal presidential approval. The three COA's were:

*Course of Action 1* proposed a time-over-event methodology, in which reductions in the number of US military patrols throughout the city of Port-au-Prince and Zone V would occur at set times following specified events. Key events were the precinct-by-precinct fielding of elements of the new Haitian National Police force (HNP), the presidential election, and the inauguration of the new president. The events specified were the sequential assignment of members of the HNP to their precincts within Zone V. Accompanying reductions in US patrol activity ***did not depend on evaluations of the effectiveness of HNP operations***. (my emphasis)

*Course of Action 2* proposed an event-over-time methodology, in which reductions in US military patrols would occur after the fielding of the HNP in the various sectors of the city. In this option, however, the ***reduction in US patrols would be linked to an evaluation of the effectiveness of the HNP***, prepared by the civilian police element of the UN mission (CIVPOL). Zone V and USFORHAITI would maintain close relations with CIVPOL in the accomplishment of this and related aspects of the mission. (my emphasis)

*Course of Action 3* was labeled the "Quick Out"; the methodology used was time-over-event. The significant differences between Course of Action 1 and Course of Action 3 were that in the latter, reductions in US patrol activity would take place simultaneously throughout Port-au-Prince and would not be related to HNP introduction in specific sectors. Additionally, the discrete number of events requiring coordination in this course of action would be minimized. This course of action provided the force commander an option to conduct a more rapid withdrawal from the zone than would be feasible under the other two. Commanders of UNMIH and Zone V military forces approved these three courses of action for further development and wargaming.

As COAs went, these were very good ones as they presented the force commander with real options that were differentiated from one another, feasible, acceptable, and supportable. They also meet the commander's priorities of force protection, safety, and mission accomplishment. As an editorial note, the placing of mission accomplishment as a third priority, below force protection and safety says a lot about the willingness to accept risks in support of mission accomplishment and the stated

goals of the intervention. It is also contrary to historical preferences of military commanders to put mission accomplishment first above all other priorities. It does however fall in line with the stated policy objectives/criteria of the administration as outlined in the previous chapter, for which the commander is responsible for supporting. I add this not to denigrate the commander's priorities, but to highlight the fact that commander's work very hard to understand the environment within which they are operating. The Haiti operation took place following the bombing of Khobar towers in Saudi Arabia and the Battle of Mogadishu, Somalia, where force protection and extreme sensitivity to casualties were brought into very sharp focus. This was an environment where casualties, on almost any scale, could result in mission termination or accusations of mission failure. This shift in priorities would also play out later during operations in Bosnia.

In the end, COA 1 was selected and guided the final actions and extraction of the US forces from Haiti. That it was the only COA feasible within the political time constraint applied, speaks again to the issue of strategic confusion. The planners followed the doctrine and planning methodology that has been taught for decades. Indeed, regression planning, from the end back to the beginning, is the very basis for strategy development. That a time limit was imposed, as a political requirement, does not make for a new or enduring doctrinal development, but merely a guidepost for fulfilling a political policy choice. In other words, the policy choice of only committing forces and resources for a set period of time bounded and limited the options available to the JTF commander within the political framework acceptable to the US government. That the JTF commander and more specifically his planners were cognizant of the political issues

speaks highly of their ability to effectively plan, coordinate, and execute the military portion of the nations policy choice for engagement in Haiti. Arguments can be made about the efficacy of the policy choice, and many have, but for the military strategy devised to execute the military portion of the intervention, strategically nothing was fundamentally new. The concept of exit strategy added nothing more to the military equation than what was already stated within the construct of ends-ways-and means. If the term, or assumed requirement for an “exit strategy” led to an enhanced awareness of specific timeline constraint that exceeded other considerations of enduring effectiveness, then the communication of that political determination was effective. Similarly, the UN use of the term “mandate”, or the military use of “commanders intent” fills the same communication function. The determination of what constitutes mission accomplishment and acceptability of risk is a political choice and not one for doctrine to define. Policy is the realm of political decision and does not belong within doctrine that has the stated purpose of providing enduring principles for the use of force. Yet policy and doctrine is an evolutionary cycle and each succeeding administration builds upon the later.

## ***The Next Evolution***

*“We must also improve the responsiveness of our government to help nations emerging from tyranny and war...Our government must be able to move quickly to provide needed assistance.”*

*-President Bush, May 18, 2005*

If the 90's were a decade of determining the proper role of the United States as the indispensable nation following the end of the Cold War, then the dawn of the new century is bringing with it the internalization of that determination within the federal bureaucracy. However, whatever that determination may be is far from complete or agreed upon. What has happened is a fundamental shift across the government in regards to understanding or accepting that getting involved early, before hostilities breakout, to help stabilize a country in decline, may in fact be cheaper and more effective then waiting until the use of force is required. The military has also evolved to accept the reality that it does in fact have a significant role to play not only in preventing a conflict from breaking out, but also to help stabilize an area following the conclusion of hostilities should force be required.

Of key importance, based upon an April 2004 NSC cabinet level meeting, was the establishment of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) within the Department of State.<sup>33</sup> The mission statement of S/CRS is to, lead, coordinate, and institutionalize U.S. Government civilian capacity to prevent o prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy. This mission statement was then backed up by a Presidential directive, dated December 14, 2005, making the Department of State the lead agency for

reconstruction and stabilization efforts. In short, S/CRS has adopted a similar planning construct as that outlined in Military Joint Doctrine (JP 3-0 and JP 5-0), advocated increased participation by DoS personnel in DoD exercises and liaison with the military theater commanders staffs, cross educational opportunities, identified materiel and personnel within the federal government that would be required to respond quickly to a crisis, and lastly, identified required funding for contingency accounts in support of rapid deployment.<sup>34</sup> State has also reinvigorated the Office of Public Diplomacy in an attempt to clarify the government's intentions and purposes around the world. While S/CRS is still getting off the ground money is beginning to be allocated and personnel assigned. Since operations in Iraq have been underway for three years, DoD will remain the lead agency for that intervention. However and intervention following Iraq, S/CRS is suppose to be in the lead. Additionally, the Office of Public Diplomacy has gotten off to a shaky start so only time will tell.

For it's part, the Department of Defense has issued directive number 3000.05, Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSSTR) Operations, November 28, 2005. This directive states that "Stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support." According to Ambassador Pascual, the Secretary of Defense has offered up \$200m in transfer authority of DoD funds as a way to quick start S/CRS operations while congressional action addresses long-term issues. It has also directed that all senior officers, Colonel and above, be tested for their foreign language aptitude. Foreign Area Officers (FAO), are being given special attention for promotion and retention as their unique training and skills are being recognized. Likewise, Special Operations Forces

(SOF), are being increased significantly as their cultural, foreign language, and civil affairs capabilities are recognized as critical to stability and reconstruction efforts. Of broader interest are changes in how force employment is viewed conceptually. Previous models depicted distinct phases in sequential order that gave the impression that combat, or operations, flowed in a logical, sequential manner from one to another and that there was minimal overlap from one to the other.

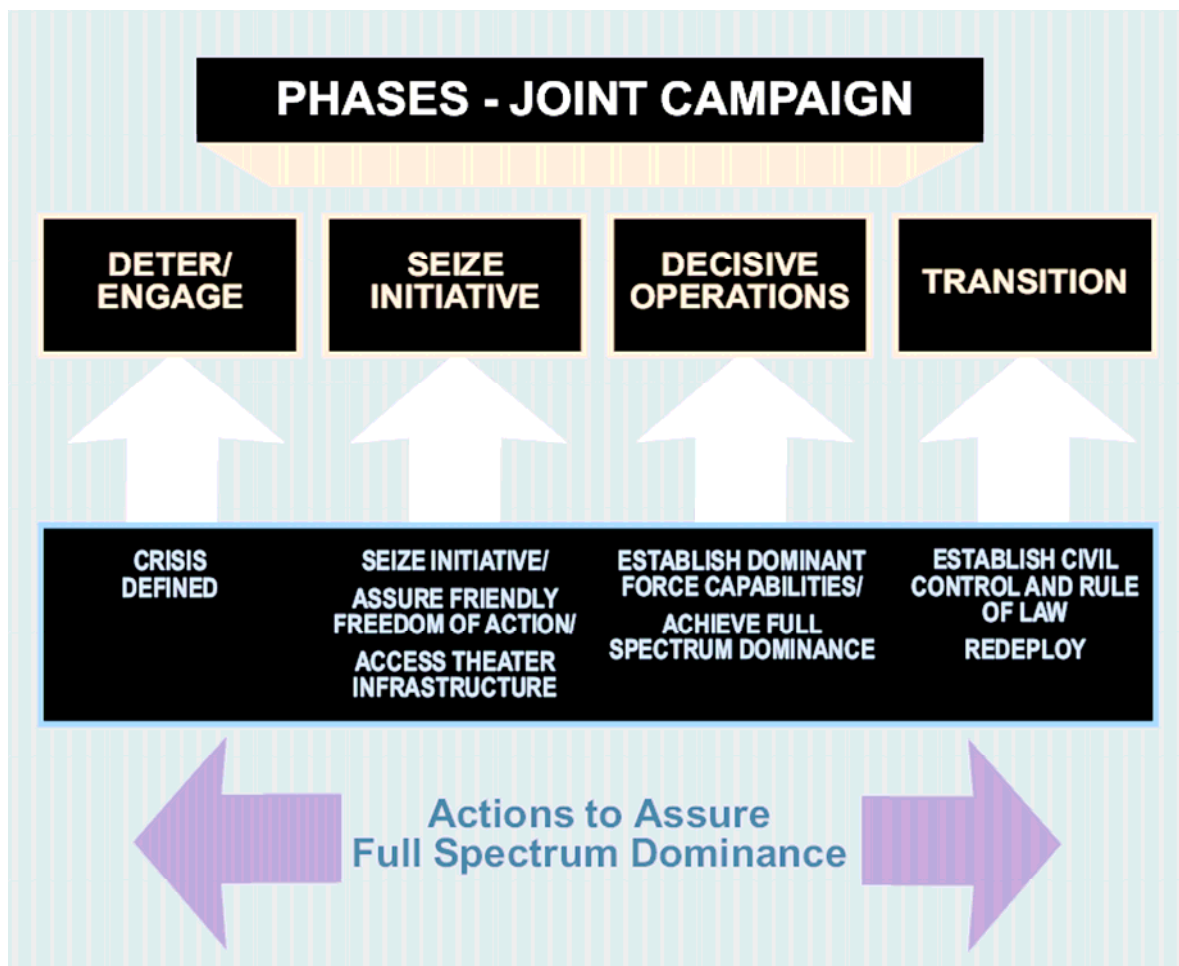


Fig 1. JP 3-0, 2001. p III-19

Current drafts of JP 3-0 and JP 5-0 include an expanded phasing model in addition to a notional model of operations that depicts more of a continuum of overlapping operations and the inherent ebb and flow of interaction describing more reality than preferential thinking.

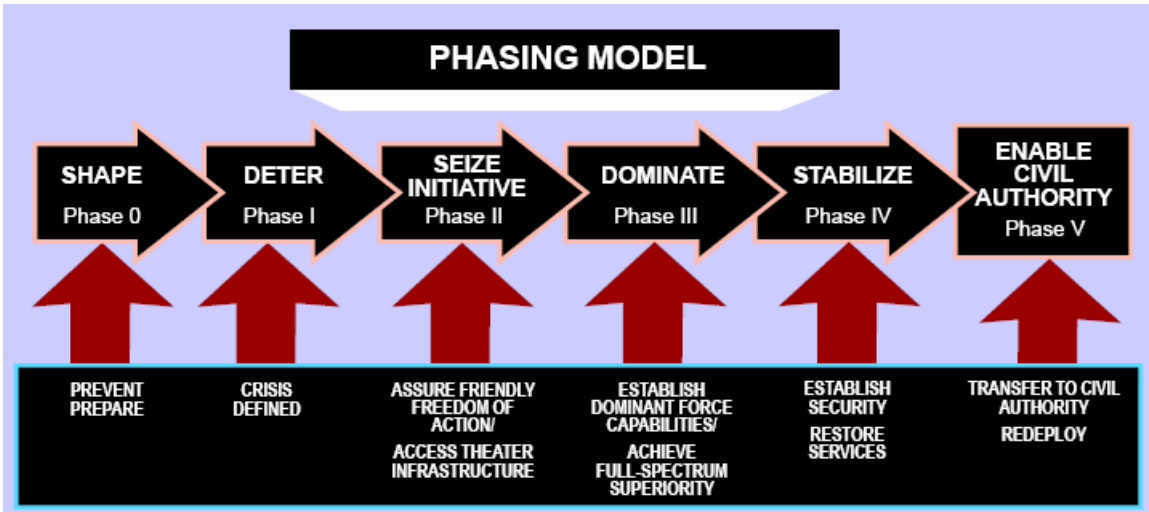


Fig 2. JP 3-0, 2005 (2<sup>nd</sup> Draft), p IV-32

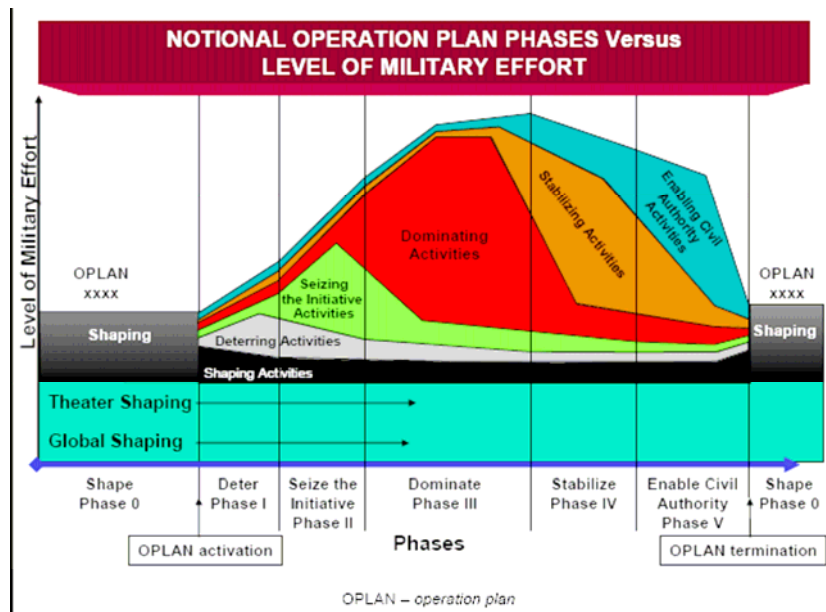


Fig 3. JP 3-0, 2005 (2<sup>nd</sup> Draft), p IV-30



Of particular note, this new model demonstrates that there never truly is an exit from an area of operations but rather a return to “shaping operations” as defined by a theater commander’s Theater Engagement Plan (TEP). This mimics recent developments within the rest of the U.S. government to continually engage the rest of the world in order to effect, anticipate, prepare, and inform, those critical actors that impact regional stability. While words matter, so do the graphical depictions that demonstrate and explain how it is we view our role and place in world events. If pictures speak a thousand words, then the diagrams in fig 2 and fig 3 demonstrate a monumental shift in how our military views its role in American foreign policy. Phase 0, shaping operations, is a continuum that never truly ends but flexes to support a multitude of NSS options.

*“Nonetheless, a hasty or ill-designed end to the operation may bring with it the possibility that related disputes will arise, leading to further conflict. There is a delicate balance between the desire for quick victory and termination on truly favorable terms.”*

***Draft*** 3-0 (Revision Final Coordination) 23 December 2005. p IV-7

## *Conclusions*

Returning to the doctrinal concept of end state as constituting, success, failure, mission termination, or *exit strategy*, the confusion lays in the illogical sequencing of the conceptual framework. The strategic (political) end state is what the nation would like or intends to achieve in expending its resources, human and materiel, by engaging in an intervention. How well, and to what effect, it achieves this end state, i.e., the final result, will influence history's verdict as to success, failure or degree thereof. It does not constitute mission termination, as this is a political choice determined during execution and dependant upon the perceived merits of continuing with the stated policy or taking on an entirely new policy direction. In the same way, end state does not constitute an exit strategy. It may very well be one component of an overall exit strategy, but an exit strategy is more about the political decision to limit the resources, and time available to achieve an end state than it is about the end state itself. These limitations are based upon political realities within which national policy is formulated. As was demonstrated earlier, the Clinton administration began its term in office with minimal political capital to drive foreign policy changes. Events in Somalia, along with the vestiges of the Vietnam War played a significant role in limiting the administrations options when it came to Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti, and Kosovo. With the reputation of the United States, as a world power, on the line and the upcoming Presidential elections, the administration developed a policy grounded in the concept of "exit strategy," a set time limit, in order to garner the support of a skeptical congress and public. This in turn brought the NATO allies into agreement and provided a united coalition that ultimately forced the warring sides into peace negotiations. Without a doubt, those inside the administration believed

that setting a deadline was critical to getting things moving forward. How this deadline effected the desired strategic end state is open to analysis as it was never enforced. The deadline did have an impact on operations in Haiti in that the military courses of action were driven by time and not effect. How much time is required to build institutions is debatable, how to be certain these institutions will last is even more open. However, ten years after Anthony Lake advocated so strongly for specific timelines, he has modified his position. In a recent interview he concluded that we should be more focused on setting realistic and achievable end states, even though they may be less than optimally desired, rather than setting arbitrary dates for withdrawal. Our questions should be more about those things that must be accomplished to give peace a chance, rather than the more amorphous ideals that only time and history can determine.<sup>35</sup>

Military leaders must be aware of the political environment within which they serve in order to better understand the intent of national policy and strategic end states. The military strategy options they promulgate must be informed and bounded by policy, and policy by its very nature is political. This in turn should help promote a more coherent national strategy combining the effects of diplomatic, informational, military and economic actions. If this policy includes a deadline, so be it. However, military doctrine should not embrace political decisions as though they were its own. Policies and politics, by design, change from administration to administration. Military doctrine should be the backbone that guides the military in developing military strategies that support administration policies regardless of their variations. To do otherwise would diminish the very foundation upon which doctrine is grounded.

“Exit strategy” is a political calculation based upon perceived political capital available and a cost benefit analysis in diplomatic (foreign) and political (domestic) terms. It also requires the marshalling of forces within the governmental bureaucracy and political courage. In the end, what differentiates “exit strategy” from all other policy options is the declaration of a date certain for withdrawal. Whether this date is set prior to an intervention or once the intervention is underway, is inconsequential. It is still a political choice and should remain firmly in the hand of politicians. Questions surrounding the use of force rightly seek to understand the intended purpose and limits placed upon its execution. These are the debates that must occur that military force does not exceed political expectation and that political expectation does not exceed military capability.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> For a more expansive discussion of War theory see Michael I. Handel. *Masters of War, Classical Strategic Thought*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Great Britain, Frank Cass Publishers, 2001.
- <sup>2</sup> Bob Hubner, Doctrine & Education Support Team, USJFCOM JWFC, e-mail to author, 13 March 2006
- <sup>3</sup> Bradford A. Lee. "Winning the War but Losing the Peace? The United States and the Strategic Issues of War Termination." In *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality. Essays in Honor of Michael I. Handel*. Edited by Bradford A. Lee and Karl F. Walling. Portland OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003.255
- <sup>4</sup> White Paper. The Clinton Administration's Policy on *Managing Complex Contingency Operations: PDD 56*. May 1997. <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd56.htm>
- <sup>5</sup> While NSC Advisor Anthony Lake attempted to codify the concept in his remarks at George Washington University; *Defining Missions, Setting Deadlines: Meeting New Security Challenges in the Post Cold-War World*. Anthony Lake. March 6, 1996, The concept never truly took hold, or was accepted by the broader NSS apparatus, as the implementation of the Dayton peace accords rapidly exceeded the 12 month deadline these remarks attempted to justify. US forces are still in Bosnia today.
- <sup>6</sup> Clausewitz. *On War*, 570
- <sup>7</sup> As cited in, Gideon Rose. *The Exit Strategy Delusion*, Foreign Affairs, January/ February 1998 <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19980101faessay1358/gideon-rose/the-exit-strategy-delusion.html>
- <sup>8</sup> Senate. *Commerce, Justice, and State Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee*, 27 April 1993. <http://web.lexis-nexis.com.ezp2.harvard.edu/congcomp/>
- <sup>9</sup> Robert Cassidy. Prophets or Praetorians? The Uptonian Paradox and the Powell Corollary. *Parameters*, US Army War College Quarterly, Autumn 2003, Vol. XXXIII, No. 3 <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/03autumn/contents.htm>  
Although written in 2003, this article is a historical accounting of the evolution of modern US military thought and is just as relevant to the 80s and 90s as it is today.
- <sup>10</sup> Joseph Cirincione. No More Exits for Colin Powell. *The Globalist*. 13 February 2003. Also see Gene Healy, Requiem for the Powell Doctrine, *Cato Institute*, <http://www.cato.org/dailys/08-22-03.html>. Originally published in the *Chicago Tribune* 11 August 2003.
- <sup>11</sup> Colin Powell, U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead. *Foreign Affairs* Winter 92/93 <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19921201faessay5851/colin-l-powell/u-s-forces-challenges-ahead.html>
- <sup>12</sup> Senior Clinton administration official, Interviewed by the author 2 February 2006.
- <sup>13</sup> Bowden, Mark. *Black Hawk Down, An American War Story*. *Philadelphia Inquirer* 1997 <http://inquirer.philly.com/packages/somalia/>. Also published in book form, *Black Hawk Down, A Story of Modern War*, Penguin Books
- <sup>14</sup> This is the first time in official policy documentation that a hint of a timeline or definitive limit is imposed. I believe this underscores the administration coming to terms with its limited political capital and the belief that economic costs cannot be determined without a firm timeline. Limiting costs is a major component to PDD 25 as the discussion was also raging about the fact that the US was \$400mil in arrears in payments to the UN. This was a "stick" that congress and administrations had used to try and force changes within the UN.
- <sup>15</sup> Clinton speech to the UN General Assembly Sept 27 1993
- <sup>16</sup> LexisNexis Congressional-document April 27, 1993. Copyright 1993 Federal Information Systems Corporation Federal News Service
- <sup>17</sup> Murdock, Clark A, *Improving the Practice of National Security Strategy, A New Approach for the Post-Cold War World*. Chapter 5. *Haiti: The long search for commensurate means*, CSIS Significant Issues Series, v.26, no. 1. Washington D.C: The CSIS Press, 2004, 51
- <sup>18</sup> Anthony Lake, PBS Frontline, *Ghosts of Rwanda*, 15 December 2003, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/lake.html>
- <sup>19</sup> Warren Christopher, "New Steps toward Conflict Resolution in the Former Yugoslavia," Opening statement at news conference, Washington, D.C., February 10, 1993, as reprinted in *Dispatch*, vol. 4, February 15, 1993, p. 81, and cited in Ivo H. Daalder, "Getting to Dayton," 83

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- <sup>20</sup> Dr Joe Nye, Interviewed by the author at Harvard University 8 March 2006. Dr Nye believed that Srebrenitza was where the Serbs overreached on the escalation ladder and essentially caused all the disparate factions to come together in a more unified fashion. It provided the clarity needed to act.
- <sup>21</sup> “Key Bosnia Meeting/Event Chronology” (White House paper prepared for media backgrounders on evolution of U.S. policy toward Bosnia, August 1995) p.1. as cited in Ivo H. Daalder, “Getting to Dayton,” 87/88
- <sup>22</sup> Dr Anthony Lake, Telephone interview by the author, 15 March 2006
- <sup>23</sup> Amb Richard Holbrooke, Telephone interview by the author, 8 February 2006.
- <sup>24</sup> Paraphrased from Lake, Anthony. *Defining Missions, Setting Deadlines: Meeting New Security Challenges in the Post Cold-War World*. Remarks at George Washington University, March 6, 1996. As cited in the PBS online series “Give War a Chance”
- <sup>25</sup> JP 1-02, as amended through 31 August 2005, states under its criteria for terms (pg ii) that there must be “Inadequate coverage in a standard, commonly accepted dictionary, e.g., by Merriam-Webster.” This is also true if there is assumed to be such a common understanding as to not require further definition. In the case of “exit strategy” an acceptable dictionary defines both terms individually and the meaning of their combination is assumed to be self-evident.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid*, National Strategic Endstate--Diplomatic, informational, military, and economic circumstances that should exist after the conclusion of a campaign or operation
- <sup>27</sup> *ibid*, Military Endstate--The set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander’s objectives
- <sup>28</sup> JP 5-0 1995 Executive summary
- <sup>29</sup> Cohen, Eliot A. *Supreme Command, Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*. New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2003. Pg 4-8.
- <sup>30</sup> Merriam Webster online dictionary. <http://www.m-w.com/>
- <sup>31</sup> Current doctrine refers to Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME) as the four levers of national power. Informational includes psychological and/or media.
- <sup>32</sup> Kevin C.M Benson and Christopher B. Thrash. *Declaring Victory: Planning Exit Strategies for Peace Operations*. Parameters, US Army War College Quarterly-Autumn 1996. 69-80
- <sup>33</sup> Presentation by Amb Carlos Pascual at Harvard’s Belfer Center, 26 October 2005
- <sup>34</sup> See, *Post-Conflict Reconstruction Essential Tasks*, April 2005. <http://www.state.gov/s/crs/rls/52959.htm>
- <sup>35</sup> Lake interview, March 15, 2006

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