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An Elusive Peace: The Foreign Policy Challenges of the Clinton Administration in a Post-Cold War World

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AN ELUSIVE PEACE: THE FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES OF THE
CLINTON ADMINISTRATION IN A POST-COLD WAR WORLD

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

by

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B.S., Louisiana State University, 2000
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My professional journey began in 2000 as a media advertising executive in the most culturally eclectic and unique city in the world: my native New Orleans. Almost nine years later, I ventured back into campus life at Louisiana State University, which served as a second home to me for so many years, on a changed course I never thought I would have the great fortune to follow. Mine is a story that overflows with so many irreplaceable individuals, who never once waived in their support for my desire to fulfill a professional goal that demanded so much of both my time and theirs.

The decision to pursue my doctoral degree at LSU began in earnest while obtaining my Master's Degree in Liberal Arts and Humanities at Louisiana State University in Shreveport. While working as a writing instructor at LSUS, I obtained an invaluable background in European History, and particularly in the areas of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, from one of the foremost experts in his field. Dr. Michael Leggiere, who now serves as the Deputy Director of Military Studies at the University of North Texas, offered resolute encouragement, and expressed a staunch confidence in my abilities while I initially attempted to navigate the uncharted waters of academia. Within his lectures and counsel, he provided a solid and objective historical background upon which I would build my knowledge of global events, and put forth a substantial, comprehensive context for my scholarly drive to effectively evaluate the world and America's role in it. I will always be grateful to Dr. Leggiere for his blunt approach and honest direction.

Prior to my return to LSU, I made an incredibly beneficial decision which, at the time, seemed to be a road block. Though my initial goal was to enter into a doctoral program immediately after acquiring my Master's Degree, I instead enrolled in the Graduate Program at

the University of New Orleans to prevent any break in scholarship after an unexpected transfer back home. Here, I had the benefit of studying for one year under Dr. Günter Bischof, the University Research Professor of History, Marshall Plan Professor, and Director of Center Austria at UNO. “Dr. B,” as I like to call him, further enhanced my scholarship in the areas of Cold War research and post-World War II global developments. He always gave me constructive criticism, and though we often approached subjects from opposite points of view, he consistently fostered healthy and informative debate, and was instrumental in expanding my understanding of the academic world. I am so appreciative of him for his support in my application process to LSU, and consider him a treasure to students who are fortunate enough to gain from his tutelage, as I certainly did.

My entry into the Doctoral Program in the LSU Department of Humanities and Social Sciences was largely determined by my incredible advisor and Committee Chair, Dr. David Culbert. For almost seven years, Dr. Culbert trusted my judgement and allowed me the freedom to pursue a topic that has overwhelmed yet excited me at almost every turn. Even during the most stressful of times, he provided an objective, insightful voice, which was always followed by an ingenious piece of wit. While he appreciated my legendary stubbornness and often rebellious attitude towards the institution of higher learning, he also taught me to respect the process, and practice what I preached when it came to objectivity in analysis. His sage advice ultimately made me a better student. He and his wonderful wife, Lubna, often welcomed me into their home for impromptu advising sessions, graciously attended my very own “Big Fat Greek Wedding,” and supported me during my time away when I gave birth to my daughter five weeks early. Dr. Culbert’s dedication to my success never faltered, and at every turn, he effortlessly fulfilled my idea of what an educator should be. Shortly following my dissertation defense, in

which he once again proved to be my greatest champion in the world of academia, I tragically lost my mentor and friend when he suddenly passed away while vacationing in Italy. He was a brilliant, warm, eccentric person who I am incredibly blessed to have known. Dr. David Culbert will always be the standard to which I will fight to hold myself. I truly hope, as one of the many graduate students to benefit from his expertise, I serve him well in my future academic endeavors. My heart remains heavy in the wake of this immense loss.

I also want to offer sincere thanks to an LSU History Department legend, who I first encountered as an undergrad, and had the subsequent privilege to work under as a graduate student. Dr. Stanley Hilton, who is now enjoying his retirement and spending much-deserved time with his cherished granddaughters, remains one of the most enthralling, passionate, and wise lecturers I have ever had the privilege to hear. Even as a twenty-year-old Mass Communications major, whose only priority was to earn my Humanities credit and embark on whatever exciting adventures awaited me in the “real world,” Dr. Hilton planted the seed of intrigue with regards to historical analysis and presentation that always tugged at me. Although it would not fully blossom for almost a decade, it was his riveting portrait of the US in the Twentieth Century, and especially during the Second World War, that eventually convinced me to alter my career path and undertake this daunting new challenge. It has been an unexpected and unequalled honor to study at the right hand of the man who first inspired my true love for historical scholarship. And his gentility and patience towards his pregnant Teaching Assistant, who was usually starving and exhausted, earns him an additional star in my book.

I would not be at this point in my academic career without the early friendship and loyalty of Emily Meyer Hall. From our simultaneous entry into the LSU Ph.D. program, through the serendipitous timing of both our marriages and pregnancies, and up to the present, she

remains a sharp, authentic sounding-board for me; not only as a colleague, but also as a fellow mother. Her ingenious sarcasm and steady hand always provide me with perspective and encouragement, and I am so fortunate to have connected with her immediately upon boarding this formidable train. I also want to thank my fellow 2017 History Ph.D. graduate, Lauren Doughty Poche, and LSU Graduate School icon Erin Halloran, for always entertaining my unexpected office drive-bys, and for keeping me updated on department events when I left my Graduate Assistantship to finally slay this dragon.

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challenging times life has offered, and helped me to overcome many obstacles with laughter and a healthy dose of surrender. I cherish the relationship that we have nourished over so many wild and wonderful years. Someday, there will be a screen play.

I have never met anyone who rivals my great fortune when it comes to family. I have six hilarious brothers-in-law...yes, six...who have always offered me lighthearted advice, and helped me to keep things in perspective throughout this process, even though they did not always understand it. I am quite positive that at this point, my wonderfully unique Greek in-laws believe that attending school as a student is my actual job. Hopefully, the party we hold and the plates we break in celebration of the completion of this project convince them otherwise. I also want to thank my aunts, uncles, and cousins, who always understood when I had to miss a special event or family gathering due to paper or project deadlines.

During the process of writing this dissertation, I lost my dear grandfather, John LeGuluche, who passed away at the age of 87. He always told my mother, his only daughter, “they can take so many things away from you...you can lose so much...but no one can ever take away your education.” My mother relayed this information through tears at his funeral, and it is something that has sustained me during this tireless pursuit. My PawPaw John, along with his beloved widow, my spunky and sassy Nana June, always provided comfort, adoration, and laughter to my cousins, to my siblings, and to me. My grandparents are a huge part of each of us. They always demanded that we seek out the warmth and authenticity of life, and follow our individual paths, regardless of the status or paycheck. I truly hope that I have made them proud.

To my sisters, Amanda Perrett Keller and Julie Perrett Vitrano: You are my holiday. You are my church. You are my home. You are my touchstone. You are my treasured past. You are my comforting present. You walk on each side of me as we venture towards our bright

futures, with our precious babies (Brody, Anthony, Lyla, and Evelyn) in tow. We are a forever team, as are they. We are unbreakable. We are the Perrett Girls. I would never be here, achieving something that has proven so arduous yet satisfying, without you both. I may provide the middle, but Amanda, you are the unbending foundation, and Julie, you are the bloom.

I will never be able to adequately express what is owed to my parents, but I can assure you it cannot ever be repaid. Growing up, my mother and father provided my sisters and me with all they had to give. But the most important gift they bestowed upon us was not in anything they bought, or even advised. It is what they exhibited. They led by example. They taught their girls that we should never settle. They taught us about hard work, discipline, and independence. And above all, they gave us the blueprints for a lasting partnership, and shared with us a daily love story filled with true respect, steadfast loyalty, and an unyielding friendship.

My father, Bill Perrett, served his country as a US Marine in Vietnam, and arrived home to find a country that did not remotely resemble the one that greeted those who returned from Europe or the Pacific mere decades earlier. His sacrifices, and his continued fight to right historical wrongs through his charity, the Black Hawk Flight Foundation, inspire me daily to present the past comprehensively, with my eyes wide open and an unbridled truth in my instruction. My Dad has always challenged me, supported me, and engrained in me that I am capable of anything I choose. At times, I feel undeserving of his pride. He is, and will always be, my hero.

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possibilities awaiting you in the future. You are going to rule the world someday, my fearless, formidable girl.

Finally, this work is above all dedicated to the amazingly selfless, contagiously optimistic, and intensely devoted love of my life. *We* did it, Jules.

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ABSTRACT

In modern US history, the 1990s are often regarded as “The Decade of Peace and Prosperity.” Though the liberalization of markets and a technology boom fueled American prosperity, expectations of post-Cold War peace remained elusive. The purpose of this study is to observe how, in the moment when the US became the world’s superpower, it also began to retreat from a position of active leadership. Elected in 1992, President Bill Clinton looked towards the United Nations as the answer to keeping peace around the globe. His administration’s policies of democratic enlargement and aggressive multilateralism aimed to combine the spread of free market democracy and collective security as concepts upon which to contain foreign conflict. While noble in its idealism, Clinton was absent any clear objectives when faced with international crises. His focus on domestic issues, and lack of attention to cases where US leadership was necessary, hurt America’s credibility as a force for humanity and justice in the eyes of many around the globe. With a focus on five serious foreign entanglements that erupted during Clinton’s two terms—Somalia, the Bosnian War, the Rwandan Genocide, Haiti, and the rise of Al Qaeda—this work illuminates a distrust of resolute American leadership among Clinton and his primary advisors. His hesitancy to wield American power, actively persuade allies, and use US influence to direct international policy reflected a nation unwilling to confront either friend or foe to advance its own interests. The rise of Al Qaeda during his presidency gives additional weight to this study’s findings regarding the administration’s dearth of focus and willpower involving direct national security threats. As Clinton increasingly looked to international bodies for direction, even at the height of US power, he allowed the nation to become mired in incompetent peacekeeping missions that too often yielded disastrous consequences, both for US forces and those they were sent to protect.

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

The 1990s. Many Americans reminisce about this period in recent history as the “Decade of Peace and Prosperity.”¹ Its commencement features the abrupt, and to most, quite surprising end to almost a half of a century of bilateral conflict between two allies-turned-adversaries after the Second World War. The quiet dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to the rise of the United States as the world’s lone, undisputed superpower.² People worldwide cheered the demolition of borders, both literal and figurative, which once fenced in millions from their families, from their freedom, and from their hopeful dreams of unfettered economic prosperity.

Although the 1990s also began with renewed tensions in the Middle East, and a subsequent war to halt and reverse the violent invasion of the Persian Gulf state of Kuwait by Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, this military conflict was short and decisive. Executed by a US-led coalition of thirty-five nations, with the support of the United Nations (UN) and the backing of most Americans, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm blurred the painful memories of Vietnam and, at least symbolically, placed the nation and its military back atop its perch as the most noble and powerful on the globe.³ Optimism for a new epoch of goodwill and a cessation of hostilities spread out from the US worldwide.

The 1990s also introduced the world to a boom in technology that remains unsurpassed in terms of global interconnectedness and access to information. Increasingly common ownership of the home computer, coupled with the massive transformation of international communications brought about by the Internet, led to a steadying of the US economy, and eventually, to a balanced federal budget.⁴ Much of this prosperity, particularly in Silicon Valley, nicknamed for its housing of the high-tech enterprises that defined the decade, developed out of American ingenuity and entrepreneurship coupled with the liberalization of global markets during the

Reagan Administration.⁵ However, politically speaking, and whether right or wrong, credit is often given to one man. And it is not Ronald Reagan.

On November 3, 1992, Americans elected a young governor from Arkansas to the office of the presidency. This unlikely underdog, nicknamed the “Comeback Kid”⁶ due to his resiliency throughout the 1992 primary campaign, electorally outperformed a well-liked Republican incumbent in George H.W. Bush, whose foreign policy credentials were nothing if not impressive. But as with most US elections, William Jefferson Clinton used a simple, direct message about America’s financial instability to win over voters. The Clinton Campaign’s concise answer to the then-present recession was simply “[It’s] The Economy, Stupid.”⁷ Coined by one of Clinton’s chief strategists, James Carville, this cutting yet candid line resonated with an economically frustrated electorate, and thus secured the Oval for the smooth-talking southerner and self-proclaimed “New Democrat.”⁸

Loosely defined, the “New Democrat” moniker arose in reaction to the overwhelming political success of President Reagan, and the national move to the right that defined the 1980s. Both Clinton and his Vice-Presidential pick, Senator Al Gore of Tennessee, offered a more centrist, moderate image of the Democratic Party as economically conservative yet still dedicated to the pursuit of social justice. For example, one of Clinton’s most popular policy proposals with the majority of Americans was rooted in “ending welfare as we know it,”⁹ which he, with the aid of a Republican House and Senate, eventually turned into successful welfare reform legislation.

As a candidate, Clinton somewhat eschewed the Left’s slavish devotion to the Keynesian tactics of deficit spending and strongly advocated for a balanced budget. In doing so, he actively sought out the Reagan Democrats who had previously abandoned the party of Franklin Delano

Roosevelt in reaction to the increasingly liberal policies of candidates like Michael Dukakis, George McGovern, Walter Mondale, and Ted Kennedy. Clinton never did win over a majority of voters, mostly due to a quite successful run by a quirky third party candidate in Ross Perot, who received almost nineteen percent of American support. However, Clinton's efforts to provide voters with a "Third Way,"¹⁰ where capitalism and a widened social safety net could co-exist, proved successful against Bush, whose broken pledge on tax increases served as the neck-strangling albatross from which the incumbent could not escape.

Many voters questioned the dedication of candidate Clinton to this more centrist, moderate path, primarily due to his image as a draft-dodging, pot-smoking Baby Boomer with a wife who lacked his inescapable charm, but certainly not his ambition for power.¹¹ However, he eventually overcame these obstacles and sold a majority with his promise to usher in a "New Covenant"¹² with America. Clinton's New Covenant featured a laser-like focus on domestic issues, such as balancing the federal budget, decreasing government bureaucracy, and nurturing free trade and American entrepreneurship. This vision was certainly different from those put forth by his more liberal colleagues and predecessors. However, Clinton also spoke of environmental concerns, a woman's right to abortion, and universal access to healthcare. The idea behind the New Covenant was a renewed social compact between Americans and the political class, and centered around "a solemn agreement between the people and their government based not simply on what each of us can take but what all of us must give to our nation."¹³

Bush's popularity, which stood at an eighty-nine percent approval rating after the Gulf War, began to decline due to his backtracking on an infamous "Read My Lips"¹⁴ pledge in opposition to tax increases. It hovered in the forties during the 1992 election season. However,

one must look further into the attitudes of the American people, and those in leadership during this time, to see the changing dynamic that catapulted Clinton, whose personal reputation and character were under constant assault, to victory in the three-man race.

Compared to Bush, Clinton's resumé on the international stage was thin. Bush's service in World War II is well-documented. Bush also served as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), as well as Vice-President for two full terms under President Reagan. He oversaw and guided the peaceful break-up of the Soviet Union, and is rightly credited with orchestrating the quick and almost total destruction of Hussein's Iraqi Army on the pretext of saving the oil-rich state of Kuwait. Though he criticized President Bush in certain areas of foreign policy during the campaign,¹⁵ once elected, Clinton mostly stayed in his lane when it came to challenging the global actions of the elder statesman. He instead concentrated intently on his domestic legislation proposals. This circumvention inevitably resulted from the realities of the many global crises staring him down once inaugurated. Clinton essentially continued Bush's policies, particularly with regards to the break-up of Yugoslavia and the escalating war in Bosnia. Even given the US role as *de facto* leader of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which had yet to be called upon in the Balkans despite its enhanced position in the wake of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, Clinton still lacked any cohesive, clear policies of his own.

Perhaps an additional reason for this hesitancy to plunge into the world of international conflict is due to Clinton being the first Baby Boomer to secure the top spot on a major party ticket and win. His past actions with regards to Americans fighting overseas and vocal disdain for American policies in war were discomfiting to many voters,¹⁶ especially those of the Silent Majority, seen as vital to Republican control of the Executive Branch for twenty out of the

previous twenty-four years. In fact, prior to Clinton, no Democrat since FDR was ever elected to a second term. Only Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson served longer terms, due to their positions as Vice President upon the deaths of FDR and John Kennedy, respectively.

Clinton would be the first president to have actively protested against American military endeavors overseas, specifically those in Vietnam, and he did so most conspicuously on foreign soil while studying at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar.¹⁷ He also went to great lengths to avoid serving in the military at the height of the draft,¹⁸ and misled Americans regarding his actions to evade his fate as a lottery pick. These suspicious activities were made public during the campaign, and the Bush team suggested he was a “draft dodger.”¹⁹ This label provoked deep-seated animosity from many veterans’ groups and those who supported them.

Clinton’s triumph offers a student of the era an interesting perspective. For the first time since Truman’s 1948 election, the Cold War and anti-Communism were largely ignored, if not absent, from the list of priorities Americans held dear. In terms of foreign policy, Bush fell victim to his own success. Clinton would capitalize on this seismic shift in what Americans felt were more urgent concerns, which, fortunately for him, sat uncomfortably in their pocketbooks. It was a changed world.

The following examination into the Clinton Administration’s reaction to such change provides an example of how the US initially took on its role as *the* global leader, and analyzes the results yielded both at home and abroad under the direction of the forty-second president. As noted in *The Art of Intelligence* by former CIA operations officer Henry Crumpton, who served as US coordinator for counterterrorism with the rank of Ambassador at Large, “the world was transforming rapidly, not least in terms of the nature of conflict, risk, competition, and cooperation.”²⁰ With an emphasis on espionage and the activities of the US clandestine service,

Crumpton decries the doubts held by many respected political leaders as to the continued need for “robust intelligence”²¹ after the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, and at the urging of the political class, including the much-admired Senator Daniel Moynihan, Congress “cashed in the [so called] ‘peace dividend’ and slashed intelligence budgets to the bone.”²² In a time when international affairs were becoming progressively unstable, removed from the, however ignoble, *stability* of the Soviet-American feud, these budgetary decisions would have a devastating effect on worldwide covert operations and networks. Many agents and leaders quit outright, stations closed, and confidence in intelligence agencies plummeted. The illumination of traitorous actions within intelligence and law-enforcement agencies, such as those of the CIA’s Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), added to this decrease in morality and confidence, both within the community and outside of it.²³ Crumpton refers to the early 1990s particularly as a “prosperous calm” after the Cold War, when America was enjoying a “delusional respite, in an imaginary world without serious threats and deadly enemies.”²⁴ America was wrong. Nothing proved this mistake more vividly and painfully than the attacks of September 11, 2001, which occurred not even one year after Clinton left office.

What Crumpton illuminates, along with many others who were active participants in high level government positions during this period, is a dubious state of comfort that permeated the US and many of its allies, particularly those in Europe and other democratized, First World nations. What actually occurred was a rise in decades and even centuries' old conflicts, mostly of a tribal or ethnic nature, and previously checked by the rigid stand-off between the two rival superpowers either by use of force or even the mere threat of force. The breakup of Yugoslavia

in 1991, and the subsequent chaos and horror that followed, provides an excellent example of the power wielded by the Cold War leash.

Many exceptions to this bifurcated deterrent exist. Vietnam is a glaring example, and the one with the most powerful legacy with regards to the use of American military might. The Korean War, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the decolonization and independence movements in Africa are also prime indicators that outbreaks of violence forged on despite the threat of nuclear war, as did continued tensions in the Middle East and civil unrest in Latin America. But what makes the *post*-Cold War violence unique is that it was, in most cases, unexpected, and even downplayed. The 1993 comprehensive review of the nation's defense strategy conducted by Clinton's first Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, and known as the Bottom Up Review (BUR), illuminated the possibility of "new dangers,"²⁵ but lacked clarity with regards to the circumstances in which military deployment may be necessary. Many of the foreign entanglements which would call for the use of US forces, even with regards to peacekeeping and intelligence, were vague. In the context of the Clinton Administration, and the manner by which it approached foreign conflict and threats to American security, it is brutally ironic that the so-called "Decade of Peace [and Prosperity]" would usher in the most destructive and pivotal attack to ever occur on American soil.

The purpose of this study is to highlight the paradox in and consequences of the fact that at the same moment when America achieved its status as the world's superpower, it also began the process of retreating from a position of active leadership, and looked more towards international bodies, specifically the UN, as the answer to keeping peace around the globe.²⁶ This shift began under Bush, but accelerated under Clinton. Several examples found in this work emphasize how supplanting the efficiency and speed of clearly-defined American action with

slow-moving, intensely bureaucratic leadership can yield unthinkable results. Ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, genocide in Rwanda, and the increased threat arising from rogue states in Africa and the Middle East provide the strongest illustrations of what can occur when the US hesitates to lead or challenge international bodies, and even allies.

The following cases under examination clarify the unintended results generated from the lack of a clear American foreign policy or objectives, particularly when the nation is asked to carry the brunt of the financial and military burden in UN peacekeeping efforts or NATO-directed missions. The country's detachment from crises where decisive foreign intervention was greatly necessary, yet avoided, such as those in Africa, came to hurt America's credibility as an unbridled force for humanity and justice in the eyes of those who suffered around the globe. It also gave the green light to a man determined to attack Americans whenever, and wherever, they could be found; a man who would view the Battle of Mogadishu, and the subsequent retreat of US forces, as proof that his nemesis was a "paper tiger."²⁷

To be fair, and as noted by Samantha Power in her analysis of global genocide,²⁸ as much as American leaders swore to prevent horrors such as the Holocaust from ever occurring again, a policy of non-intervention in Third World feuds during the Cold War years, particularly when speaking of direct military intervention, carried the day with virtually every US president since FDR. Additionally, the UN often failed to embark on missions of peacekeeping if the region in need aligned itself with either the US or the USSR. Power refers to the years between 1956 and 1987, when the UN launched a total of only eleven interventions for the purpose of maintaining ceasefires or preventing further conflict in certain regions. However, from 1988 to 1994, as the USSR succumbed to its mortal injuries, the UN Security Council launched sixteen missions, with many more to follow.²⁹ The Soviet-American threat of nuclear confrontation and Mutually

Assured Destruction (MAD) served as a powerful deterrent for administrations from both political parties in the US, and for UN member nations. For this reason, Hungary was on its own in 1956, the Prague Spring succumbed in 1968, and a blind eye was turned to a multitude of murderous rampages by Third World dictatorial rulers, many of whom filled the power vacuum left specifically by the absence or withdrawal of US power or policing. One of the most obvious cases is the Cambodian genocide in the post-Vietnam War era, which unfortunately grew out of the abandonment of the American pledge “Never Again” in relation to the Jewish Holocaust.³⁰ American policy makers opted to avoid further negative political consequences, and left their South Vietnamese allies and millions of Cambodians alone to meet their tragic fate.

History is currently repeating itself, as it often does. Regardless of what one may feel about the 2003 Iraq invasion, or Vietnam for that matter, even the most war-weary Americans do not wish to doom a region to chaos and carnage as a result of a premature exit, particularly after military successes on the ground. It shows a consistent lack of political will when, in the post-Vietnam era, and now, in Iraq, those abandoned in the wake of an American war, or even a US humanitarian or diplomatic presence, are left in the most precarious of positions. Additionally, it is this same absence of principled decision-making, sacrificed at the altar of the public poll, that often prevents most American presidents, Clinton among them, from intervening in conflicts outside of their borders; even if these conflicts include unspeakable atrocities committed against civilians.

What makes this study unique is that the Clinton Administration’s calculations with regard to the use of American force, or even strong-armed US leadership, falls in between the two most controversial military interventions in US history: Vietnam and Iraq. Therefore, those in charge during this time period had both something to learn, and something to teach. But with

a president whose foreign policy experience was limited, and whose focus and strengths remained heavily on domestic affairs, anything resembling a “Clinton Doctrine” simply does not exist. A scholar can easily look to the Truman Doctrine, and the policy of containment, to analyze the American-led effort, in concert with a UN force, in the Korean War. The Eisenhower Doctrine, and its vow to protect the independence of regimes threatened by communist influence, even to the dismay of French, British and Israeli allies during the Suez Crisis of 1957, offers a direct line to understanding US primacy in the Middle East. The Reagan Doctrine provided a significant change in Cold War policy, as his administration issued a Presidential National Security Directive to not only contain, but *reverse* the advances made by communism in the Third World; this move forced the USSR to keep up with an arms race Reagan understood his adversaries could never win.³¹

However, when examining President Clinton, it is up to the historian to examine the most challenging, and urgent, foreign policy questions faced by his administration, and determine what motives drove the president and his team towards the decisions made and the actions either taken or deferred. As this work highlights, Clinton’s policy proposals, or calls for the use of force, were consistently born out of reaction. Outside of occasions of tough rhetoric, his record presents neither an ideological nor policy-driven “doctrine” with a coherent and distinct agenda for foreign affairs. Instead, it was a constant battle between national interests and humanitarian ones, often with no discernible, concrete basis for US involvement, with the exception of direct terrorist attacks on US interests. For this reason, his foreign policy can be viewed as lacking cohesion and direction, which may account for his vacillation when the world, and American allies, refused to cooperate. A *Washington Post* article that appeared during Clinton’s search to replace his first Defense Secretary after merely one year, quoted an unnamed advisor who

asserted, “[the Administration] really just wanted to get the Pentagon off the screen. Every time it was on, it was trouble that interfered with the President’s agenda. Their attitude was, if they could subcontract out the Pentagon, they would.”³²

For the purpose of concision, as well as the supremacy of an issue faced in relation to other foreign policy exploits during the president’s eight-year term, this study focuses on five main areas of international testing for the Clinton Administration: UN Peacekeeping efforts in Somalia; UN Peacekeeping operations and NATO intervention in Bosnia; the Rwandan Genocide; Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti; and the rise of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. With the exception of the uptick in both the frequency and destruction of Islamic extremist attacks under the direction of Osama Bin Laden, the bulk of these challenges arose during the president’s first four years in office, and almost led to the public’s denial of his second chance.

The starting point for this endeavor relies heavily on both Clinton’s personal views on American leadership and intervention, and, just as valuable, on the outlook of those who held the most influence during his presidency. Especially during Clinton’s first term, his national security and diplomatic apparatus fell into two categories: those revealing a “Vietnam Syndrome,” and those revealing a “Munich Syndrome.”³³ Vietnam Syndrome involves the fear of committing forces to an open-ended conflict, or in the context of a civil war, due to the legacy of the controversial conflict in Vietnam. Politics play heavily into decisions made with this anxiety in mind. Munich Syndrome afflicts those who look to the Munich Conference in 1938 as the worst diplomatic decision made by world powers in modern history. Infamously, at Munich, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appeased Adolf Hitler by allowing him to annex the German-speaking portion of Czechoslovakia, the Sudetenland, after a mere promise from the

dictator for no further territorial advancement. Hitler quickly reneged on the agreement, and in the face of British and French passivity, continued his devastating march through Europe.

Clinton himself is a product of “Vietnam Syndrome,” as was his first National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, and his first Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. Lake served in Vietnam, but as a Foreign Service Officer with the State Department, and not with the military. In 1970, Lake resigned in protest when President Richard Nixon began bombing Cambodian strongholds, which housed ammunition to be used against American forces and protected North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers.³⁴ Lake deemed this action to be an escalation of the unpopular war, and wanted out. He also worked within the Carter Administration’s State Department. When Clinton chose him to be his National Security Advisor, Lake quickly determined that the new president would not risk political capital on foreign matters, and at least for the first few months of the administration, yielded most of his influence to Christopher.³⁵ Clinton’s new Secretary of State, Christopher, who also served under President Carter, had a reputation of being “obsessed with negotiations...[and had a] fear of the use of force, and lack of intellectual firepower.”³⁶ As illustrated in this author’s analysis of Bosnia, Christopher’s weaknesses with regards to the power of influence and persuasion, specifically when it came to relations with allies, often led to further indecision within the Clinton national security apparatus.

One could argue that Colin Powell, a holdover from the Bush Administration as Clinton’s first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also fits the category of those with “Vietnam Syndrome,” but for very different reasons. Where Clinton and many of his advisors feared committing troops thanks to a distrust of military intervention and the possibility of escalation, which could lead to political fall-out, Powell revealed his own personal experience as a Vietnam

Veteran. He consistently refused to commit his troops to an ill-defined mission with no clear political or military objective.

The most influential advisor to exhibit “Munich Syndrome” was Madeleine Albright. As a Czechoslovakian refugee herself, forced out of her home with her family as a child during World War II, with her father declared a dissenter once the nation fell under communist control, Albright viewed the appeasement of the West during the Munich Conference as the most devastating diplomatic failure of the twentieth century.³⁷ For this reason, she often favored multilateral action and the confrontation of authoritarian dictators initially in her role as Clinton’s UN Ambassador, and then as the first female Secretary of State during the president’s second term. Although she was a vocal opponent of using force to remove Saddam Hussein’s troops out of Kuwait, Albright earned a hawkish reputation while at the UN, as she eagerly pushed for the use of American military power in world affairs, and particular in areas of humanitarian crises.³⁸

In her autobiography, Albright explains how the increased number of peacekeeping and humanitarian missions accepted by the UN greatly enhanced her position. According to Albright, “Because the UN was embroiled in so many issues, I was involved in shaping and implementing U.S. foreign policy to a greater extent than any of my predecessors.”³⁹ Due to this unparalleled new status, she adds, “I knew not only how the [UN] Security Council worked, but how to work it.”⁴⁰ Albright’s statement becomes especially important when one examines her vocal support of humanitarian intervention. She often spoke and acted in a manner that reflected her personal history with regards to WWII atrocities and genocide. Her stance during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide is therefore quite surprising. As the leading international representative of the US, and given her weight at the UN, one would assume she would be the foremost proponent

of putting a stop to the systematic slaughter that occurred. But Albright towed the line for the Clinton Administration. Instead of using her voice to advise the president on what she increasingly felt was the wrong move, she parroted Clinton's position, and essentially betrayed her own instincts. Albright would not be the champion for the security and safety of the Rwandan people as she was for those in Eastern Europe.

The first national security team put together by Clinton was not hindered by their lack of experience, but rather, by the manner in which their experiences led to unrealistic proposals and goals. Again, Powell is an exception, due to his position as one who designed the military response to political objectives, should they exist. Most of Clinton's foreign policy advisors believed strongly in the pursuit of more humanitarian aims, the expansion of democracies, advancement of human rights, and the use of collective security, even if US interests were not directly at risk.⁴¹ They advocated for the idea of moral principles, instead of self-interest, and believed that a policy worked only if both the international community and American public agreed upon its implementation.

An examination into the mindset of Clinton with regards to military action supports the assertion that foreign policy and, particularly, the use of American force, were rarely at the top of his list. Many of the examples which paint Clinton as a disengaged, or at least reluctant, Commander-In-Chief on the international stage come from critics who are either former or current members of the Armed Forces. However, even an analysis of Clinton supporters and staff yields evidence of the low prioritization given to the question of American involvement in crises such as the break-up of Yugoslavia and initial European apathy; the Rwandan genocide; and the build-up of radical Islamic terror groups and their attacks during the 1990s and 2000.

It is quite understandable that many veterans of the Vietnam War, and a majority of the military serving at the time of his campaign and subsequent win, viewed Clinton in a negative light due to his draft deferment and history as a vocal critic of forceful American intervention. However, one account of Clinton's alleged detachment from his responsibility in global conflicts involving American power abroad serves as a credible and persuasive source for anyone interested in the Clinton Administration's circumspect approach to military engagement. In *Dereliction of Duty*, Lieutenant Colonel Robert "Buzz" Patterson, who served Clinton as a military aide from May of 1996 to May of 1998, describes the rare honor he held of carrying the "nuclear football," a briefcase whose contents include, most importantly, the country's nuclear launch codes.⁴² This proximity to power gave Patterson a unique insight into the workings of the Clinton Administration, as well as Clinton the man. Patterson not only holds a distinguished record of service in the Air Force, participating in endeavors from Grenada to Desert Storm, and Somalia to Bosnia; he also provides an honest yet almost hesitant critique of Clinton, whom he believes often shirked his primary responsibility of keeping Americans safe and protecting American interests abroad.

In Patterson's own words, his book "is not a personal attack on President Bill Clinton,"⁴³ as he often describes the president as someone who treated him well and was personally quite likable. Patterson also does his best not to delve into Clinton's well-publicized personal failures, unless the scandal in question affected Clinton's decision-making or distracted the administration from immediate issues of national security. However, the book does criticize the president for what its author describes as "his [Clinton's]...failure to lead our country with responsibility and honor."⁴⁴ Speaking mostly of American impotence towards the rise of Radical Islam in its formative years, Patterson suggests that Clinton "left huge areas of vulnerability" in the nation's

security apparatus, and treated foreign policy "as an afterthought...a distraction that was important only insofar as it impinged on domestic politics and the media."⁴⁵

The author's justification for his ultimate condemnation of Clinton will be further illuminated throughout this work, but his main point should be mentioned now. Patterson accepted his position with a military officer's commitment to his mission, and a "professional devotion" to both his beloved country and the president he would serve.⁴⁶ As he states in his preface, upon his final days as Clinton's military aide-de-camp, feelings of disillusionment and dejection replaced his original sentiments of dignity in his assignment, and devotion to and admiration for the man who held the highest office in the world. It is for this reason that Patterson chose to write about his experiences, stressing his motivation as non-political.

While Patterson's account of the Clinton Administration's lack of focus on foreign affairs comes from someone with first-hand knowledge of military intervention, another source provides a relatively similar admission, though not by design. In a memoir of his years working with the Clinton campaign and consequently, as one of the president's most trusted Senior Advisors during his first term, George Stephanopoulos describes the strengths and weaknesses of his boss with a strong, and almost cynical foundation of political intrigue. *All Too Human* is a first-hand telling of a young, idealistic aide from the liberal northeast whose hunger for power and success led him to an unlikely, serendipitous encounter with the Arkansas Governor; an encounter that would make the young Stephanopoulos notorious in his own right.

The value of Stephanopoulos's work to this particular historical analysis lies more in what is left either unsaid, or said in passing. Stephanopoulos recounts with neurotic zeal his role in the 1992 election, the passing of Clinton's tax and deficit reduction plan during his first term, and the various scandals that plagued the administration even prior to the Monica Lewinsky affair.⁴⁷

What is notable about Stephanopoulos's record is what is either missing, thrown in as an afterthought, or presented as just one more thing he had to spin. Events such as the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the systematic murder of almost one million people in Rwanda, are largely presented as an aggravation, or unwelcomed obstacle, to an administration where domestic policy was the key to polling success and an eventual second term. Issues of global conflict were often considered solely the purview of the United Nations, regardless of the impotence of the international body when dealing with urgent and horrific occurrences that required decisive US leadership and a quick, powerful, resolute answer.

Some of Clinton's more notable foreign policy achievements, or at least, his attempts at improving the global landscape, are not included in depth within this study. For example, one of the most marked actions during his presidency is the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the US, Canada, and Mexico. NAFTA did not come without controversy, and received criticism from one of Clinton's main constituencies, labor unions, which is most certainly why he did not commit to supporting the proposed deal during the 1992 campaign.⁴⁸ At the time it passed, the legislation achieved bipartisan support. Since NAFTA is primarily an economic agreement between peaceful neighbors, it does fall not into the category of foreign conflict or involve debate over the use of American military might.

Another foreign policy challenge not under significant scrutiny within this work is the continuing problem of North Korea, which did not escape the attention of the Clinton Administration. Nor did continued diplomatic efforts in Russia. Clinton often met with Boris Yeltsin. He supported the Russian president during attempted coups, and listened to Russia's concerns over the proposed expansion of NATO to include certain former Soviet-puppet states of

Eastern Europe. In point of fact, when coupled with his intense supervision over negotiations between Yasser Arafat and the Israelis, it appears as though Clinton almost preferred to dedicate his time to colossal, historically insurmountable challenges, to the detriment of immediate problems which required quick, steadfast decisions and the gamble of political capital. While this undertaking is noble, and quite necessary, diplomacy is often a slow, painstaking process, and neither the situation in North Korea, nor the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, presented the administration with the demand for immediate decision-making, particularly with regards to the use of US military force.

One vital point to be made concerning this analysis of Clinton's foreign policy is the absence of any detailed coverage of some of the domestic scandals surrounding his presidency. Whitewater, the White House FBI files controversy, Travelgate, and the suicide of Deputy White House Counsel Vince Foster receive no significant attention.⁴⁹ The only relevance of these scandals to this work is how they too often diverted attention away from the multitude of pressing challenges facing the president and his staff. As stated by Clinton's FBI Director Louis Freeh, "I spent most of the almost eight years as director investigating the man who appointed me."⁵⁰ In a time when Islamic terrorism was not only intensifying, but also classified as an issue for law enforcement, this admission by Freeh is noteworthy. Another exception is the Lewinsky Affair, but its notability within this study is merely due to its serving as a precursor to a suspiciously-timed and ineffective retaliatory strike against Al Qaeda targets for the August 1998 American Embassy bombings in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Since virtually every comprehensive history of the Clinton presidency includes intense coverage of his personal escapades, there is no need to belabor them here.

The ebbs and flows of a constantly changing foreign policy, from administration to administration, specifically upon the relegation of the Cold War-era containment policy to the annals of history, requires that historians seek out motives, expose a cohesive worldview (or lack of one), and evaluate action. Because a look at each successive administration's approach to international conflict mirrors a pendulum swinging from one side to the other in post-Cold War foreign policy, it is vital to provide context for future endeavors, or simply, to analyze what worked, what did not work, and why. The Clinton Administration looked to the international community in a period of increasing globalization, and engaged in a primary strategy of multilateral intervention, with American policy largely based on decisions made at the UN. After 9/11, the George W. Bush Administration, even with its multinational coalition for the Iraq War, embarked on a more unilateral route. With a defiant, self-determined voice, the younger Bush declared to the world, "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you're with the terrorists."⁵¹ The Bush Doctrine evolved from the preemptive use of force against foreign terrorists and those who shielded or funded them; it then expanded to include the spread of American democratic values through nation-building. Many analysts claim this alteration compromised the positive gains Bush made in using the full power of the US and its international allies to dismantle terror networks.⁵²

President Barack Obama withdrew from this heavily-criticized position of heavy-handed American leadership, and, like Clinton did early on, relinquished most issues of international conflict, many which demanded strong US power, to the global community, and the UN in particular. With the exception of NATO's mission to remove Muammar Qaddafi from Libya, Obama's adherence to his campaign promise to end the Iraq War, along with his anti-imperialist ideology, led to many unintended, often disastrous consequences. The rise and spread of the

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which recently made its way into Libya amid the power struggle that followed Qaddafi's ousting and subsequent death at the hands of his own people, is the most notable. ISIS maintains a comfortable presence in the chaotic, broken nation, as well as others throughout the Middle East.⁵³ Its success in Libya was preceded by the controversial deaths of four brave Americans during a terror attack on the US Diplomatic Compound and CIA Annex in the city of Benghazi by the hands of Islamic extremists. The attack went essentially unanswered by the administration, with only one suspect currently in custody.

Obama retreated from what is viewed by many critics to be an overly aggressive Bush-era foreign policy, which both Americans and international affairs experts deem to be primarily comprised of a nation-building concept. The Bush Doctrine is seen as an attempt to disseminate the much-debated ideal of American exceptionalism by means of an occupying force. However, whether one agrees with the Iraq War or not, which now surpasses Vietnam in terms of unpopularity, Obama's hasty removal of troops against the advice of his Joint Chiefs and generals on the ground undoubtedly led to a power vacuum. The ruthless and barbaric remnants of a previously struggling Al Qaeda in Iraq filled that vacuum as the newly-formed Islamic State, whose goal is to create an Islamic caliphate in the wake of the American exodus.⁵⁴ On paper, President Obama kept his campaign promise to end the war, but the fighting continues. Violence has intensified and spread, much like what occurred in Cambodia following the fall of Saigon in 1975; only on a larger scale and with far greater consequences for the security of both US interests abroad and Americans at home.

So, what happens next? President Donald Trump was elected in November of 2016, after defeating President Clinton's wife and President Obama's former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, in a surprising upset. Trump campaigned with an amalgamation of foreign policy

positions put forth by previous administrations. Many talking heads assert he has proposed an unclear vision developed out of a promise to both avoid committing troops in overseas operations, but also defeat enemies, ISIS chief among them, quickly and decisively.⁵⁵ His ideas on foreign affairs include both a verbal denunciation of Bush and the Iraq War, as well as a continued assault on Obama's fecklessness against the violence committed by Islamic extremists. Trump's wild card status in the realm of foreign policy comes from his statements regarding how he would utilize American forces effectively if a decision to intervene in some way is made. He campaigned on eradicating Radical Islamic Terror, yet also focused heavily on internal security, and not wasting American blood and treasure overseas. His "America First" promises hearken back to the days of American isolationism prior to World War II,⁵⁶ though he also vows to dedicate substantial funds to the rebuilding and modernization of the military, solidifying an unrivaled readiness of US troops should the need for war arise.⁵⁷ Trump has also been critical of the UN, and he has demanded more support, both financial and in terms of forces, from NATO members, which some criticized as his threat to pull out of the alliance altogether.⁵⁸ With humanitarian issues such as the Syrian refugee crisis, and the emboldened stature of enemies in Iran, Russia, and many terror-dominated regions in the Middle East and Africa, it is incumbent upon the new president to understand the policies of success and failure over the past twenty-five years, and present a coherent vision for America's role in an increasingly dangerous world.

The following examination into Clinton, and the cases under consideration, provide an overarching view of foreign policy decisions made during a period when US leaders believed America could achieve physical security through economic security, and thus turned inward, punting its leadership role to the notoriously bureaucratic UN. Currently, the UN Security Council consists of five permanent members: Russia, China, Great Britain, France, and the US.

It also includes ten other nations elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Its resolutions require a three-fifths majority, but can be vetoed by one of any of the five permanent members.⁵⁹

For reasons of social justice and a more equal means of representation, many UN member nations have advocated for the addition of permanent members from Third World countries to serve on the Security Council. The Clinton Administration supported this move, but it was never undertaken. More permanent members mean more opportunities for vetoes, and thus, gridlock.⁶⁰ It would also dilute American influence. It was not in the best interests of the US to supplant its authority to the UN when its global role was virtually unchallenged in the 1990s. In the increasingly anti-American climate emanating from the body's headquarters in New York today, many national security analysts view this proposal as a detriment to US power.

Though this study illuminates the often sluggish and contentious nature of the UN when it comes to taking action, it is not the author's intention to demonize the organization altogether. Nor is it the goal to maintain that Clinton's aim of engaging in multilateral rather than unilateral pursuits involving aggression is wrongheaded. George H.W. Bush himself encouraged the notion of collective security to combat aggression, though he envisioned this development as emerging under American leadership. This idea served as the foundation for confronting the crisis in Kuwait. After the success of the coalition war in Iraq against Saddam Hussein, Bush noted:

We can see a new world coming into view, a world in which there is a very real prospect of a new world order...a world where the United Nations—freed from Cold War stalemate—is poised to fulfill the historic vision of its founders; a world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations.⁶¹

The main point is whether Clinton's consistent dependence on UN mandates, as well as the varied stances of US allies, in his decision-making served the nation and its interests well during his two terms. The UN acts in the guise of neutrality when it intervenes. As a result, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing often pass without interruption unless troops, not aid workers, are specifically deployed under a mandate to use force. As one can easily assume, the construction of a multilateral force by a body comprised of individual nations, each acting in their own self-interest, does not generate the most efficient means of quick intervention and protective action.

In order to adequately support the conclusions drawn in this work, and present a comprehensive portrait of each area under examination, the following compilation of research features a combination of both traditional and non-traditional references, including online government documents, media publications, and personal memoirs. When an historian investigates more recent events, particularly those involving issues of national security and foreign policy, a traditional dependence on archival sources is insufficient. Matters of declassification and limited access steer the research process in a direction that warrants the use of materials outside of those official documentary records which remain largely out of reach. The application of these findings helped to construct a persuasive and accurate historical description of what occurred during the time period under consideration. Though the use of online sources includes some opinion pieces, mostly derived from newspapers or research institutions, the majority are primary records from the digital collections of government institutions, such as the CIA, the US State Department, and the UN. These materials provided much of the credible evidence necessary to strengthen the legitimacy of the overarching argument. Given the advancements made by several of these entities with regards to digitizing their records, as well as the challenges involved with investigating contemporary subjects, past

methods of gathering historical records had to be manipulated in order to achieve a comprehensive, insightful evaluation.

Often, an analysis of foreign policy within a particular administration leads the historian to the *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* series, which offers a beneficial compilation of significant documents relating to decision-making and activities centered on foreign affairs. Since the subject of this work is President Clinton, and the most current *FRUS* records are those of the George H.W. Bush Administration, the *FRUS* series was not utilized. Presidential libraries can also serve as a valuable resource for those who seek to unlock the inner workings of a particular administration. However, due to Clinton's emphasis on domestic policy, as well as the availability of evidence regarding his foreign policy from alternative reserves, little research from the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library and Museum is included in this analysis. For information not included in its archived records, the Clinton Library directs the researcher to supplementary sites, including The American Presidency Project at the University of California-Santa Barbara, the CIA's Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, and the United Nations' released documents, all of which were heavily consulted for this analysis. When merged with personal accounts offered by those closest to the president, in addition to news coverage and historical context, the motives and considerations fundamental to decisions made by Clinton and many key officials within his administration achieve greater clarity.

The significance of this work is the challenge it presents to past comprehensive analyses of Clinton's foreign policy approach, which cover both of his presidential terms. While similar in historical record and in some cases, interpretation, particularly for those overseas conflicts which arose during his first four years, the difference between this study and more prominent,

past accounts published on the subject is in the suggestion that an evolution occurred. Two books which specifically put forth this narrative are *Clinton's World*, written by former *Foreign Affairs* editor William Hyland, and journalist Richard Sale's *Clinton's Secret Wars*.⁶² Both are excellent sources of information regarding the president's challenges in international affairs, and are often referred to throughout this work. However, each draws a conclusion that Clinton lessened his focus on domestic issues as he became better acclimated to his position as Commander-in-Chief in the global arena after learning from some initial mistakes. Sale, for example, argues in *Clinton's Secret Wars* that after a series of unsuccessful foreign policy ventures in the early 1990s, Clinton became a "tough-as-nails world leader" who "narrowly missed getting Osama bin Laden" during his second term.⁶³ He also maintains that Clinton was guided by "exceptional moral strength, tactical dexterity, and strategic skill," and displayed an "inner steel" when and where it counted.⁶⁴ Sale points to Clinton's handling of the Balkans as one example of the president's resolute, steadfast leadership, but by most accounts, this characterization is simply not supported by sufficient evidence. It took Clinton two years and numerous missteps in devising and selling a plan to his European allies before he was finally willing to exert US influence and power to stop the ethnic cleansing occurring in Bosnia.

While Clinton exhibited some aspects of growth and confidence in his decision-making on foreign affairs, such as his 1998 bombing of Iraq in retaliation for Saddam Hussein's failure to comply with UN weapons inspectors, as well as his decision to intervene in Kosovo, the president's unwillingness to go on the offensive against direct threats to US security interests complicate the evolution narrative. This hesitancy is best illustrated by his reluctance to engage in any significant action against the Taliban-protected Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan. As the radical terror group increased in size and scope, and its attacks became more frequent and

destructive, Clinton either launched symbolic and ultimately ineffective air strikes, or neglected to act whatsoever, as in the case of the bombing of the USS *Cole*.

With the exception of working tirelessly with the Israelis and Palestinians throughout his entire presidency on an ultimately thwarted peace settlement, which reached its demise at the Camp David Summit in 2000, Clinton faltered in many areas where concrete US leadership, even if unilateral, could have halted actions and even stopped them before they began. Leadership, as described in this work, does not automatically imply that the introduction of US troops was the guaranteed solution to a particular problem. In fact, in many cases, even when military action was taken, it was not done so effectively, and more importantly, it was not timely. It is up to the historian to determine whether or not Clinton's well-documented tendency to delay was more the result of a changing worldview after the end of the Cold War, a simple lack of experience, an innate distrust of American military intervention abroad, or too much trust in international coalitions. Evidence suggests it was a combination of these factors. The post-Cold War hesitancy for strong US intervention and the commitment of troops is the most persuasive, especially in terms of political calculations. But the other obstacles to Clinton's lack of decisive action in foreign policy rival one another in a close race for second place.

In 1992, Francis Fukuyama wrote a book entitled *The End of History and the Last Man*, which argued for the emergence of a new era of peace and security brought about by the triumph of liberal democracies over rival forms of governance. Loosely based on an article written by Fukuyama in 1989, and published in the wake of the collapse of Soviet communism, its premise offers a unique assessment of the trajectory of competing ideologies regarding the role of the state in society. Fukuyama suggests that the superiority achieved through the foundation of liberty and equality in a modern liberal democracy, regardless of whatever social ills and

instabilities may result from imperfect implementation in certain regions, serves as proof of its achievement as the “final form of human government.”⁶⁵ His work cites the beliefs of philosophers GWF Hegel and Karl Marx that the evolution of human society was not without an end. Fukuyama notes that for Hegel, the “liberal state” would bring about “a form of society that satisfied [mankind’s] deepest and most fundamental longings.”⁶⁶ For Marx, of course, it was communism. But for both Hegel and Marx, the winning form of governance would bring about a halt to further development, because the question of which institutions and ideas best serve society would be answered. In the early 1990s, communism lost this battle. Also, the inherent weaknesses and failures of totalitarian regimes with varying ideologies at their base enhanced the stature of Western, democratic political systems as the premier form of government.

At the time of the book’s release, Fukuyama did not assert that the dominance of liberal democratic institutions meant a stop to all political violence afflicting the world. However, he suggested a victory belonged to democratic, capitalistic societies, and argued in part for a possible cessation to the wartime horrors of the twentieth century due to the unrivaled military prowess and technological advancement held by free nations.⁶⁷ Though it received a healthy dose of criticism, and regardless of whether one accepts it as accurate or not, Fukuyama’s thesis reflects a far-reaching, common sentiment permeating the globe after the end of the Cold War. The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and conversely, the strengthening of NATO, initiated a widespread state of enthusiasm for a break in hostilities and a chance for global peace. It is in this context that President Clinton assumed the office of the presidency in 1992. This pervasive outlook cannot be overstated when it comes to analyzing Clinton’s outlook on international affairs within its proper historical framework. As described by historian Carole Fink:

The remarkably peaceful demise of the Soviet Union touched the entire world: in Eastern Europe the former satellite states gravitated towards the West, and

Moscow's previous clients Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, and the Palestinians—already living on reduced subsidies—were set adrift. China, the world's last remaining major Marxist state, pressed forward with economic liberalization under the direction of its Communist Party (which Vietnam would emulate), and in the Third World India and other socialist-leaning countries also moved toward a market economy. Moreover, the removal of the Soviet threat dealt a blow to the right-wing governments in Africa and Latin America that had gained US support based on their anticommunism.⁶⁸

It appeared as though the world were entering a new age of peace and prosperity through interconnectedness, particularly due to technological advances and open markets. Fink succinctly sums up the 1990s by stating “‘Globalization’ became the catchword of the post-Cold War decade.” However, as President Clinton would discover, history marched forward with no concern for the positive aspirations held by so many leaders worldwide, he being the most prominent among them. The spread of radical Islamic fundamentalism, the re-emergence of violent nationalism, and warring ethnic rivalries ultimately damned the “peace” portion of the “Decade of Peace and Prosperity” to its status as a rather elusive ideal.

Endnotes

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² For a concise explanation of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the post-Cold War world, see Carole K. Fink, *Cold War: An International History*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2017), Chapters 10, 11, and Conclusion; See also McFaul, Michael and Regine A. Spector, “External Sources and Consequences of Russia’s ‘Sovereign Democracy,’” in *New Challenges to Democratization*, eds. Peter Burnell and Richard Youngs, (London: Routledge, 2010), 131.

³ Taylor, Phillip M., *War and the Media: Propaganda and Persuasion in the Gulf War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 1-3.

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⁷ Description of Carville and Stephanopoulos’s “War Room” strategy in George Stephanopoulos, *All Too Human: A Political Education*, (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1999), 88.; See also Bill Clinton, *My Life*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 42.; and Sidney Blumenthal, *The Clinton Wars*, (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003), 46.

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¹² “Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in New York,” *C-SPAN*, July 16, 1992.

¹³ “Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in New York,” *C-SPAN* July 16, 1992.

¹⁴ Vice-President and Republican Presidential candidate George H.W. Bush delivered this infamous line in his 1988 RNC acceptance speech, and received much criticism when he reneged on the firm promise of “Read my lips...No new taxes” during his presidential term. For most analysts, the backtracking done on this pledge cost him the 1992 election. See “George H.W. Bush 1988 Acceptance Speech at the 1988 Republican National Convention,” *C-SPAN*, August 18, 1988, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?3848-1/george-hw-bush-1988-acceptance-speech> (accessed March 3, 2016).

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⁴⁰ Albright and Woodward, *Madame Secretary*, 165.

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⁴⁴ Patterson, *Dereliction of Duty*, 20.

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⁴⁷ Stephanopoulos, *All Too Human*.

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Chapter 2. OUT OF THE COLD: THE DEMISE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE PROPOSED FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE “NEW DEMOCRAT”

Beginning in the 1980s, in the midst of intense financial hardship in the USSR, exacerbated by an ill-fated invasion of Afghanistan, a number of occurrences of civil unrest and reform movements arose in Eastern Europe in response to harsh Soviet repression and economic strangulation.¹ Starting with the Solidarity Movement in Poland, which garnered both overt and covert support from President Ronald Reagan, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and the Polish Pope John Paul II, the mostly peaceful revolutions of 1989 in the Eastern Bloc began a process that reduced the Berlin Wall to a pile of rubble. By the end of 1991, the Soviet Union was peacefully dissolved.²

The US president who oversaw this climactic world event was George H.W. Bush. Instead of punishing this long-time adversary, Bush delicately controlled the disintegration process to dissuade hard-liners within the USSR from launching a last-minute assault against the agreements being arranged by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The two leaders finalized a treaty reducing nuclear stockpiles and the number of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) in both nations. Known as START I (the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of July 1991),³ this agreement was the culmination of almost a decade of ardent diplomatic work. Bush then continued this approach with the democratically-elected leader of the new Russian Federation (Russia), Boris Yeltsin. Overall, under Bush’s direction, the fall of the Soviet empire became the triumphant removal of a foreign policy adversary that menaced Americans and their Western allies since the end of World War II.

President Ronald Reagan is rightly credited with financially crippling the Soviet Union when he forced the struggling power to keep up with the US in a futile arms race. As a result, he

delivered the fatal wound.⁴ However, supporters and critics alike recognize the steady hand of diplomacy brought to the tenuous situation by his successor, President Bush. The US opened embassies in the new Russia and former Soviet puppet-states, and focused its energy on upholding the legitimacy of Yeltsin in Moscow.⁵ The Cold War was finally over.

With this immense foreign policy win in his opponent's corner, Democratic Presidential Candidate Bill Clinton had to delicately choose which world crisis he could utilize to land the most punches during the 1992 campaign. Clinton suffered from his lack of support for another successful foreign intervention by President Bush: the Gulf War. During the 1992 Vice-Presidential Debate between Al Gore, Vice-President Dan Quayle, and Perot's running mate, retired Admiral James Stockdale, Quayle attacked Gore by repeating statements made by Clinton against the war, which were viewed either as an example of equivocation, or a significant lack of perspective.⁶

As Bush obtained congressional approval for the Gulf War resolution, then-Governor Clinton was asked by the press how he would have voted if he stood in their positions. He now maintains that he supported the resolution, but his public statements on the matter at the time conflict with this sentiment. He answered, "I guess I would have voted with the majority if it were a close vote."⁷ This reply motivated Clinton's campaign critics, who maintained that the governor was nothing more than a slick, poll-driven politician. In his autobiography, Clinton attempts to explain his awkward response by stating, "At the time, I hadn't thought I would be running for President in 1992."⁸ This excuse does little to mollify Clinton opponents, who continue to promote the narrative that he is a purely political animal. Clinton made matters worse by admitting that both of the senators from Arkansas influenced his decision, when each

voted against the war's authorization. This appeared to Bush surrogates as a clear example of political pandering.

After Clinton delivered four campaign speeches laying out a more “internationalist vision” for US foreign policy, which blended “idealism and pragmatism, internationalism and protectionism, [and] use of force and reliance on multinational institutions,” the Bush campaign and many in the media judged his muddled foreign policy as trying to be all things to all people.⁹ The Bush White House decried the governor as “a closet dove masquerading as a hawk,” and sarcastically charged that his “experience in world affairs is limited to the breakfast at the International House of Pancakes.”¹⁰ Indeed, Clinton had no foreign affairs record of his own on which to run; his vision was disjointed. Idealism in foreign affairs can be quickly shattered; one is better armed with a realistic outlook and ability to problem-solve. Helping Clinton, foreign policy remained a footnote in the campaign. The economy was the key issue.

Once elected, Clinton held a reception for diplomatic representatives following his inauguration where he laid out a broad, somewhat vague conceptual framework for his approach to world affairs. He included “three pillars” upon which his vision rested: “economic security at home, restructuring the armed forces to meet new challenges of the post-Cold War globe, and support for democratic values across the globe.”¹¹ As an overarching thematic presentation, these ideas sounded credible. Pressing challenges, however, demanded greater specificity.

The most significant foreign policy issue confronting the candidates during the 1992 election was the situation in the Balkans region of Eastern Europe, which the Bush Administration had yet to adequately confront. Clinton criticized Bush for not taking decisive action in Bosnia.¹² He advocated lifting an arms embargo put in place by the United Nations, and supported by the US and the rest of Europe. He also encouraged the use of coordinated airstrikes

by NATO.¹³ The Democratic nominee stated “I specifically would not foreclose the option of the use of force on that issue [Bosnian conflict], because I’m horrified by what I’ve seen.”¹⁴ Once in office, his rhetoric softened. At one point during a televised town hall meeting, Clinton answered a question on his administration’s immobility on the Bosnia dilemma with a rather weak explanation. He stated, “I’m doing the best I can.”¹⁵ Clinton realized that so far, his European allies were not willing to send their own forces to secure a ceasefire. They preferred diplomacy and sanctions. Clinton had yet to fully understand that US commitment, historically comprised of money and firepower, often served as the carrot to lure and secure faltering allies. Once the American media began to bombard its viewers with images reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps, Clinton began to feel the pressure.¹⁶ It is always easy to make foreign policy decisions on a campaign tour bus to New Hampshire or South Carolina. It is entirely different when one sits in the Oval Office, faced with daily intelligence briefings, uncooperative allies, and an adversarial press, all waiting for a definitive, workable solution.

A typical Clintonian address exhibited little in terms of foreign policy. A look at his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in New York provides context, and highlights Clinton’s initial outlook as to what he expected to face on the world’s stage. He noted:

We meet at a special moment in history, you and I. The Cold War is over. Soviet communism has collapsed and our values—freedom, democracy, individual rights, free enterprise—they have triumphed all around the world. And yet, just as we have won the Cold War abroad, we are losing battles for economic opportunity and social justice at home. Now that we have changed the world, it’s time to change America.¹⁷

Clinton’s proposed foreign policy approach centered on fostering economic strength, and achieving peace through the spread of free trade and democratic values. For this reason, he included a promise to make deep defense cuts, which in theory, would put more dollars into

creating jobs at home. He delivered this promise along with a commitment to keep the military strong, “ready and willing to use force if necessary.”¹⁸ Once president, this pledge proved rather difficult to keep.

Two telling illustrations of Clinton’s inexperience in military affairs, and with military leaders, occurred immediately after his inauguration. One concerned heavily-debated budget decreases; the other resulted from a campaign promise to lift the ban on homosexuals openly serving in the armed forces. On January 25, 1993, the Joint Chiefs demanded a meeting with the new president to discuss their strong opposition to what that they viewed as encouraging social experimentation within the military.¹⁹ Then-Chairman Colin Powell relayed the objections of his fellow officers. Powell also offered Clinton, who felt discrimination against gays and lesbians in the armed forces was akin to the segregation of African-American soldiers decades earlier, a way to temper the situation and temporarily please both advocates and critics. Powell suggested that the president wait until he appointed his Secretary of Defense, and offer the public a six-month timeline for a full assessment of whether the ban should be lifted, and how. The general stressed, “Don’t make the gay issue the first horse out of the gate with the armed forces.”²⁰ While Powell acknowledged the bravery of homosexuals who undoubtedly had served in the military since its inception, it was an entirely different, and much more controversial, step to allow them to serve openly. The officers making these decisions claimed they were not so much concerned with their own personal views, but more “with maintaining morale and good order.”²¹

Clinton respected Powell, and decided against pursuing the issue with real vigor until he earned some credibility as Commander-in-Chief. But the president’s agreement with Powell did not sit well with staff members who believed his campaign promise to solve the issue in favor of lifting the ban. Clinton describes the White House staff during his first term as “talented, honest,

and dedicated,” but also admits “most of them came out of Arkansas, and had no experience in working in the White House or dealing with Washington’s political culture.”²² After initially agreeing to Powell’s advice on how to address the ban with military leaders, Clinton held several more meetings on the issue, including one with the Senate Armed Services Committee, which eventually accepted the six-month timeline. This proposal upset many Clinton staffers. The negotiations leaked to the media, and the House passed a resolution against lifting the ban, followed by the Senate. As the chief executive, Clinton could veto any legislation introduced, but Congress held enough votes to override it.

To military officials, the issue was a frivolous one, especially when the Pentagon faced daunting questions over existing, and escalating, foreign conflicts. It did not even attract much attention during the campaign, as all Democratic primary candidates supported lifting the ban, and Republicans did not significantly address or exploit it for political gain. Several old-school Democrats, such as Robert Byrd of West Virginia, whose own history towards civil rights was not always one of tolerance, were very much against Clinton. Ironically, the president gained some Republican support; most notably, from Barry Goldwater. Nevertheless, Clinton’s first interaction with the Armed Services was the exact one Powell urged him to put off.

A struggle developed between civil rights advocates and military personnel. Military leaders felt that lifting the ban threatened unit cohesion and combat readiness. Gay and lesbian activists saw the ban as blatant discrimination. The conflict provided rich subject matter for journalists and pundits alike. Finally, after six months of collaboration between the new Secretary of Defense Les Aspin and the Joint Chiefs, an unpopular compromise appeared which neither satisfied civilian activists nor military detractors: “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell [DADT].”²³ This Department of Defense Directive allowed homosexuals to continue to serve, but only if

their private lives, and sexual orientation, were kept secret. DADT also prohibited military personnel from investigating the sexuality of a service member without sufficient evidence of an open violation of the policy. Powell was disappointed in the new president when he lost control of the objective, and allowed what was essentially a social issue to become the administration's first priority with regards to working with the Armed Services. President Obama officially overturned the unpopular policy in September 2011, and issued a Defense Department Directive to allow gays and lesbians to serve openly. By this time, it occasioned little controversy.²⁴

Clinton's second misstep with regards to principal military policy and interaction with members of the Armed Services was the Bottom-Up Review (BUR). According to its author, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, the BUR's purpose was to "provide a comprehensive review of the nation's defense spending, force structure, modernization, infrastructure, and foundations."²⁵ The BUR was the second assessment of defense requirements conducted within a two-year period. The first, known as the Base Force assessment, was completed by the Bush Administration in January 1992. Widespread agreement existed on both sides of the aisle to reduce the size and budget of the military after a massive build-up during the Reagan Administration. The aim was to do so without sacrificing military readiness or modernization.²⁶

Problems with Aspin's BUR arose immediately due to the release of Clinton's proposed defense cuts in February 1993,²⁷ prior to the completion of the review and recommendations. As a result, many in the military and Congress viewed the exercise as one in which Aspin outlined defense requirements within the confinements of his boss's budget. Though budget considerations certainly provide a range within which national security policy makers work, they should never infringe upon an honest evaluation of what is militarily necessary to protect the nation and confront international crises. Bush's Base Force already included a \$3 billion dollar

cut for Fiscal Year 1994, which would begin on October 1st. Aspin multiplied these cuts by four, which the military feared would lead to “faster cuts in troops, less training time, and fewer ships than President Bush had envisioned.”²⁸ Military leaders also feared a drastic reduction in American military personnel stationed in Europe. The Cold War had ended, but American forces on the European continent were vital both to the nation and the world. Ultimately, Aspin delivered an assessment that challenged Clinton’s proposed cuts, which would later create a huge spending discrepancy.²⁹ The damage Clinton inflicted with regards to optics deepened the suspicion among military leaders regarding the president’s goal of reducing force capabilities to bare bones.

The BUR also included several other deficiencies. Even with recommendations for drastic cuts in each branch of service, it was full of overly ambitious claims of the new role American forces would play in the post-Cold War world. The three most notable points for criticism arising from the BUR were:

- A.) The assumptions underlying the strategy of planning to fight and win two nearly simultaneous regional conflicts;
- B.) The force levels recommended to carry out that strategy; and
- C.) The funding proposed for such recommended force levels.³⁰

Basically, Aspin vastly overstated the capabilities of his proposed BUR force. Under his troop level reductions, if one major regional war broke out, the US would not have enough reserves should another conflict emerge. The largely unforeseen, massive growth in UN peacekeeping operations and limited military interventions also threatened this readiness. The uptick in the frequency of deployments for these lesser operations cut into regional contingency forces, which were already stretched thin.³¹ By his own account, Aspin needed a military with the ability to fight two major regional conflicts simultaneously. But the BUR challenged the traditional definition of engagement. Force reductions appeared alongside an increased tempo of operations

and opportunities for deployment due to greater participation in multilateral peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.³²

Clinton's defense budget fell around \$70 billion short of the requirements for the BUR force, which projected funding through 1997.³³ He refused to provide the funds for his own defense secretary's proposal. Every American president faces the problem of meeting the basic needs of the military amid budget restraints. However, Clinton launched too early, and too aggressively, in order to fulfill his campaign promises to elevate spending at home. By 1998, Clinton increased domestic spending by \$300 billion, while cutting defense by \$100 billion.³⁴ He made the right move in directing Aspin's review, but the BUR had virtually no effect on the defense budget. This action angered the rank and file within the Armed Services. The BUR also reduced much of its spending on modernization programs and technology, including satellites and imagery, which would prove burdensome for his successor.³⁵ The messages sent by Aspin's BUR, Clinton's massive budget reductions, and the focus on social issues heightened fears among military leaders regarding the president's readiness to lead them into battle.³⁶

A major concept behind Aspin's military assessment was Clinton's emphasis on international cooperation and faith in the UN. This proposed course relied upon the idea of "aggressive multilateralism."³⁷ The concept behind this strategy is a combination of multinational forces aimed at providing collective security and humanitarian intervention during world crises. Aggressive multilateralism was the brainchild of UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright. During the confirmation hearings for her ambassadorship, Albright advocated for a "new beginning"³⁸ for the United Nations, presumably with American leadership and power at the forefront of the venture. Barely six months into her position, she expanded her views on the subject, advocating for "preventive diplomacy...[where] Americans would have to 'open their

minds to broader strategies in multilateral forums.”³⁹ In Albright’s mind, humanitarian aid and the sponsorship of UN peacekeeping, combined with collective security entities like NATO, were not only vital to the internal safety of US citizens, but to American interests overseas.⁴⁰ Aggressive multilateralism, combined with the concept of “democratic enlargement,”⁴¹ which sought to use American democracy and market economics as a means of diplomatic influence, formed the basis for the Clinton Administration’s foreign policy during his first term. Events, however, dictated that the president change course, especially in the realm of UN peacekeeping operations.

The few pronouncements introduced by Clinton regarding a more internationalist foreign policy initially did not provoke criticism. Similarly, the inclusion of the idea of a UN Rapid Deployment Force, which would involve “a standing UN army and...permitting putting U.S. forces under various UN commands,”⁴² also met little resistance while in its conceptual stage. After the crises faced by the administration within its first year, and what most Americans viewed as the failure of the UN to serve as a competent force for humanitarian or peacekeeping purposes, these proposals took some well-deserved hits.

In his study of the changing world Clinton encountered, and the manner by which the new president attempted to “remake” American foreign policy, former *Foreign Affairs* editor William Hyland notes: “the era of multilateral foreign policy and collective security, centered on the United Nations, had finally dawned.”⁴³ But the challenges stemming from the Clinton Administration’s approach to foreign entanglements looked more like crisis management. Hyland’s view of Clinton’s responses to foreign conflict during his first term is succinct and fair. Some of his findings are referenced in this work. Hyland gives an accurate portrayal of Clinton as impatient, preoccupied with his domestic agenda, and only sporadically involved in foreign

affairs.⁴⁴ He also describes the president's national security advisors as idealists, whose utopian proposals of global cooperation and America leading merely by principle did not match the problems they faced. According to Hyland, when these concepts "clashed with the real world, they needed the support of their president."⁴⁵ Clinton often found it difficult to support, or sell, these grandiose goals of multilateral peacekeeping, collective security, and humanitarian intervention, and rarely expended the political capital to do so.

Hyland also claims an evolution in took place as Clinton gained more experience on the world stage. Clinton showed some signs of maturation. He was far more willing to mobilize NATO forces in Kosovo when in 1998, Slobodan Milošević made his second attempt at ethnic cleansing. But evidence of overall growth is not apparent. With regards to collective security and multilateral cooperation, particularly within the UN, Clinton failed to use American leadership in a manner that gave credibility to his own original aims. When one examines Clinton's response to terror attacks, his approach to foreign affairs remained a reactive one throughout his eight-year term. Examples of an absence of foresight for pre-emptive decision-making in areas such as Bosnia, Rwanda, and later, in Afghanistan, seem to indicate the primary driver of the president's call to action resided in the old journalistic mantra of "If it bleeds, it leads." In the new age of global communications and the widespread, almost instantaneous dissemination of news stories and powerful images, Clinton often followed in the media's footsteps.

Kathryn Olson echoes this idea of improvisation by Clinton when it came to the eruption of foreign conflict, and especially when the military option was on the table. Olson suggests that the Clinton Administration's early vision of democratic enlargement, which used the expansion of market democracies as a post-Cold War means to influence the conduct of international

actors, essentially “named chaos as the global enemy to an ideal order.”⁴⁶ In her review of Clinton’s rhetoric on foreign affairs, Olson argues that chaos gave the president not only an enemy, but the opportunity to avoid confining himself to a specific agenda. By combining “economic, environmental, security, and social issues”⁴⁷ and presenting them ambiguously during eight foreign policy speeches in 1993, the Clinton national security team gave itself more latitude in determining which fights to pick. The result was the complete absence of any pattern when responding to international threats or crises.

Tony Lake, who authored the proposals for democratic enlargement, attempted to replace Cold War containment with a more Wilsonian notion of spreading American ideals and power, only with an emphasis on international trade and domestic economic growth.⁴⁸ Humanitarian aid and collective security were included in this framework, but quickly fell out of favor following the peacekeeping challenges of Clinton’s first year. The main problem with democratic enlargement was its naiveté. During a time when foreign conflicts involved ancient rivalries and struggles for power, fundamentalist-inspired terrorism, and authoritarians in search of nuclear capabilities, an obscure policy based on the spread of American values would not suffice.⁴⁹ When making the decision to send American troops into harm’s way, the containment of chaos could not serve as a foreign policy objective.

Several global challenges awaited Clinton upon his arrival in office. The focus he applied to non-urgent matters supports the view of his giving low prioritization to issues such as the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and the crisis in Somalia, both of which reached disastrous levels during the first year of his presidency. These two events were present during the campaign, so Clinton understood the demands awaiting him. Haiti, too, falls into this category, though the Caribbean island did not receive the global media attention generated by the human suffering

taking place in the Horn of Africa and the Balkans. Soon, Clinton would have to embrace his role as Commander-in-Chief, and confront these international crises head on.

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Chapter 3. “BLACK HAWK DOWN”: UN PEACEKEEPING AND THE LEGACY OF A TRAGEDY

On October 3, 1993, a team of US Joint Special Operations forces embarked upon a mission to hunt down and capture two lieutenants of Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aideed, part of a UN-designated, American-led command to cripple and capture Aideed himself.¹ Heading into the center of ancient rivaling tribes in the city of Mogadishu were nineteen aircraft, which included surveillance AH-6 and MH-6 Little Birds and eight Black Hawk helicopters. Ground assault forces consisting of Humvees and five-ton trucks carried additional Army Ranger, Delta Force, and SEAL (Sea, Air, Land) Special Forces troops. Their job was to escort both the prisoners and the assault forces back from the unstable area once the operation was complete. In total, 160 American servicemen were in place to launch a formidable snatch and grab offensive against loosely formed, warring tribal factions who served as the only obstacle to the success of their mission.² The US forces expected their assignment to last one hour.

It was the middle of the day, and the soldiers undertaking this task understood, and respected, the dangers of being sent to an ill-defined, volatile area. They were familiar with past conventional forces, on similar missions in other regions, that encountered unexpectedly effective resistance from locals. But they were prepared. After sitting around in their compound on the outskirts of Mogadishu where they had arrived five weeks earlier, these elite soldiers, by all accounts “heavy metal avengers, unstoppable, *invincible*,” looked forward to “finally going in to kick some serious Somali ass.”³ While the overarching target was achieved with the capture of Aideed’s lieutenants, the operation ended the next day after an intense urban firefight. The fierce encounter culminated in two UH-60 Black Hawks shot down and destroyed, eighteen elite US soldiers dead, seventy-three wounded, and an American helicopter pilot held hostage. The tragic

clash would become known as the Battle of Mogadishu, and later as *Black Hawk Down* thanks to the success of Mark Bowden's book and subsequent film.

Back home, Americans were presented with the horrifying consequences of US attempts, made necessary by UN security resolutions, to economically and politically reconstruct chaotic nations with no central government, but merely violent clans vying for power. Nothing brought this truth home more effectively than the televised images of a dead US soldier being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu.⁴ To comprehend how and why the US intervention in Somalia escalated from a humanitarian aid mission to one of peacekeeping with the approved use of force, one must look at Somalia's disintegration, and the roles of the UN, and Presidents Bush and Clinton, in the decision to dispatch troops to the region. As the first major foreign policy defeat under the new Clinton Administration, it served as baptism by fire, and put under scrutiny when and how to utilize American troops, and risk their lives, in peacekeeping operations sanctioned by the UN.

In 1960, Somalia achieved its independence as a nation after being held as a UN trust territory. This status meant the land was held under the protection of another UN member nation as it prepared for independence and worked to establish democratic political institutions.⁵ In 1969, a socialist faction, backed by the Somali Army, led a coup to bring the commander of the Somali Armed Forces, Mohamed Siad Barre, to power. Barre first aligned himself with the Soviet Union, but after he invaded Ethiopia, which also received support from the USSR, the Somali president turned his attention towards the US.⁶ Barre's goal was to gain assistance from the Americans in order to maintain power.

Somalia is made up of rival clans, consisting of those who supported Barre, and those who suffered from his ruthless acts of repression and violence. In January of 1991, the clans not

aligned with Barre joined forces to overthrow him. Forced into exile, Barre later died in Nigeria in 1995.⁷ The conflict with Barre and his removal from leadership in Somalia exacerbated existing internal chaos and led to a shocking humanitarian crisis, as the warring factions continued to strive for power in the vacuum left in Barre's absence.⁸ Savage clashes occurred in a state with no central authority, stable economic system, or democratic institutions; innocent civilians were often caught in the crossfire.

The most notable consequence of the instability that plagued the region was famine, so the UN stepped in to provide assistance. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 733, which noted the "rapid deterioration of the situation...and the heavy loss of human life and widespread material damage resulting from conflict in the country."⁹ Newly-elected UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, under the guise of maintaining international peace and security, increased humanitarian assistance and sought to persuade conflicting parties to agree to a ceasefire. Under UN Security Resolution 746, passed on March 3, 1992, a ceasefire agreement took place in Mogadishu; yet the resolution admitted that the "factions have not yet abided by their commitment to implement the ceasefire," which caused a halt to the reception of life-saving assistance to the emaciated Somali people.¹⁰

The Security Council also issued another resolution, UNSR 751, which formally established the UN operation as UNOSOM (United Nations Operation in Somalia).¹¹ During this time, the two primary warring factions, with one headed by a notorious and charismatic killer, Mohammad Farah Aideed, continued to fight for control of the region as the populace starved. After televised images of "the gaunt faces of frail withering small children"¹² spread worldwide, the UN, and at the time, the Bush Administration, realized the need for quick action.

The UN dropped tens of thousands of tons of food and other supplies to the malnourished Somalis. The US also sent aid through Operation Provide Relief, under the direction of President Bush, as part of the UN humanitarian mission. The deliveries were often intercepted by members of the rivaling clans. Security was necessary. As a result, the UN enacted Chapter VII of its charter, which allows for the use of force to maintain peace. Under Article 43, all UN member nations “undertake to make available to the Security Council...armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security.”¹³

In December 1992, President Bush dispatched a small group of US Marines to protect the food drops and ensure the aid reached their intended targets. Prior to this humanitarian action by the UN and Bush Administration, 300,000 Somalis perished either from war or starvation.¹⁴ This endeavor, known as Operation Restore Hope, included the US taking the reins as head of UNITAF (United Nations’ United Task Force) in Somalia. In this originally clear, limited leadership role under Chapter VII, the actions taken proved to be an initial success. However, the UN changed its goal when increasing violence by Aideed and his supporters interfered with the operation. Even with almost 30,000 soldiers on the ground, housed in compounds directly outside of urban areas, the situation deteriorated due to the altered initiative, with UNITAF peacekeeping troops now encouraged to capture Aideed under the designation UNISOM II.¹⁵ In response, Aideed ramped up his efforts at disrupting UN activities and attacked UN and US forces.

Clinton’s UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright contended in August of 1993, when the situation in Somalia quickly deteriorated due to a lack of coordination among peacekeeping forces, “By seeking to disarm Mr. Aidid, the U.N. is fulfilling its mandate in Somalia.”¹⁶

Albright may have been morally just in her comments about the responsibilities of the UN, but Americans, including those in the Democrat-led Congress, had little to say in the matter. As a result, the public was ill-prepared for what would occur in October.¹⁷

Clinton showed little fear as to the change in the UN mission and the escalation of hostilities that followed. While the Bush Administration resisted the expansion of the role of the US military, the Clinton Administration's ideas of assertive multilateralism mirrored UN concepts of peace enforcement and possible nation-building.¹⁸ However, as noted by the chief author of the Cold War-era containment policy, George Kennan, "the very prerequisites for a democratic political system do not exist among the people in question."¹⁹ The region was mired in violent conflict, and showed no signs of developing a stable, centralized government without a lengthy commitment by US forces. Any negotiations for peace or democracy-building between clans had to involve Aideed, due to his powerful position in the region. Even if the Battle of Mogadishu had not occurred, Americans planned to exit Somalia after fulfilling their mission to feed and provide security for peacekeeping forces. Without any governmental authority, the conditions would return to where they were prior to UNISOM intervention.²⁰ Clinton himself spoke of these challenges in his speech to the nation following the Battle of Mogadishu. The difference lies in the president's promise that continued US involvement, even for a mere six months, and only to protect aid distribution and UN peacekeepers, would provide stability and sustainability for the Somalis once the American forces departed.²¹

The Clinton Administration's support for the UN's authorization to hunt down Somali chieftains evolved from a shoot-out with Aideed's loosely-formed militia that killed two dozen Pakistani soldiers during the summer of 1993.²² This shift changed the nature of the commitment. The UN was now taking sides in the middle of a civil war, and the US was

expected to lead. Clinton's top military advisor at the time, Colin Powell, who oversaw the initial troop deployment aimed strictly to protect humanitarian aid during the Bush Administration, contends Somalia remained first for him at this time.

Powell describes the manner by which the situation escalated, and the lack of interest shown by the administration in the security of American troops. As the raids by the Somali warlords continued, Powell viewed the mission as "quicksand that the UN 'nation-building' mission had sucked us into."²³ In his autobiography, Powell also angrily describes Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's casual refusal to provide Major General Tom Montgomery, who led the mission, "US helicopter gunships and AC-130 strike planes to attack Somali strongholds."²⁴ Powell hated the idea of allowing the entrance of US soldiers into ancient clan rivalries. Once American troops were on the ground, Powell wrote, Aspin should have granted them what they needed. Clinton agreed with Powell's assessment, and Major General Montgomery's request, but failed to direct Aspin to fulfill the equipment demands of the mission's commanders. Just days prior to the October 3 battle, Powell told the president how he really felt about the confusion of the mission. He advocated a quick departure. Clinton responded with an admission that he had not paid much attention to the UN resolution to capture Aideed.²⁵

It is not the aim of this analysis to place the blame for the deaths of American soldiers on Clinton. However, he was quite stubborn in his views regarding the efficiency of the UN, especially when placed in the unfamiliar position of deploying US forces. Clinton's unwavering support of UN peacekeeping efforts, especially when they involved US troops, is somewhat surprising, given his detachment from both the actions taken by the UN and the new mission it forged. The president seemed to place too much trust in the capabilities of the international organization, even when the lives of American soldiers were at stake. As noted by former UN

Ambassador under George W. Bush, John Bolton, “The Bush Administration [George H.W.Bush] sent U.S. troops into Somalia strictly to clear the relief channels that could avert mass starvation. It resisted U.N. attempts to expand that mission.”²⁶ Essentially, the problem was the almost stealth manner by which the initial Bush mission to protect humanitarian aid deliveries transformed into one of peacekeeping, and then manhunting, with no explanation offered by the president until it was too late. Limited intervention slowly evolved into “mission creep,”²⁷ where the presence and purpose of American forces changed, and the prospect of a timely exit without serious incident evaporated.

According to a *Washington Post* article after the Battle of Mogadishu, “Clinton and his aides viewed Somalia as a laboratory where their theories of a new kind of ‘peacemaking’ mission would be proved.”²⁸ Several statements made by Clinton and his advisors support this accusation. In July of 1993, when speaking to reporters, Clinton claimed that the goal of the UN was to fulfill its humanitarian mission and “continue to work with the Somalis towards nation-building.”²⁹ Just days after the October 3 tragedy, Clinton denied this statement in a report to Congress. During a June 1993 press conference, the president upheld the UN’s purpose “to undermine the capacity of Aideed to wreak military havoc in Mogadishu.”³⁰ In the same conference, he also refused the statement that US forces included getting rid of Aideed as one of their primary objectives. The seemingly apathetic administration asserted as late as September 1993 that the humanitarian mission was a stunning success. Two weeks later, eighteen Americans and hundreds of Somalis were killed.

After the Battle of Mogadishu, President Clinton conducted a policy review of what went wrong, and introduced a plan to withdraw all US troops from Somalia within six months.³¹ This decision did not come without an unintended, and disastrous legacy. It haunted the Clinton

Administration. It served as a cautionary tale regarding what could likely occur when the president sent US soldiers into areas of foreign crisis, even under the pretense of peacekeeping. The losses in Somalia led to Clinton's refusal to commit to any significant US aid during the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, and increased his hesitancy to commit to substantial military support in Bosnia. Another unforeseen consequence involved radical Islamic militants, who were paying close attention to what they believed would be a long, drawn out fight between the US military and a small group of Muslim renegades in Africa. When Clinton announced a six-month withdrawal date, it did not go unnoticed.

Here is where foreign policy, especially in an age of few conventional wars, gets tricky. Only a small percentage of Americans understand the brutal realities of war. In the age of counter-insurgency warfare, which essentially defines Vietnam as well, the public has little patience for what it sees as elite US soldiers losing their lives to Third World criminals with no justification. The images of American bodies being dragged through war-torn streets by a mob of criminals, along with the widely-distributed hostage video of Blackhawk pilot Michael Durant, confirmed public fears of utilizing military force with unclear objectives in unknown places.³² They were unaware of the heroics involved in the fifteen-hour firefight that followed the downing of US helicopters and the attack that ensued.

Ignorance as to what occurs on the ground during combat is why the Commander-in-Chief makes decisions regarding the use of force, sometimes against the wishes of the American people. How many movie-goers wanted US troops to rush back in and exterminate the enemy after watching *Black Hawk Down*? Does this question oversimplify the choice Clinton faced? Perhaps. He had to decide whether to accept defeat, and abandon the ill-conceived operation, or avenge the lives of those lost by "going in with 'decisive force' to defeat the Somali warlords."³³

As presidential advisor George Stephanopoulos notes, Clinton worried he would take public heat from the Democratic House and Senate if he decided to retaliate.³⁴ To make matters worse, media outlets such as *USA Today* published articles suggesting Clinton's national security team was not paying attention in Somalia. Behind closed doors, the president vented his anger towards his foreign policy advisors, whom he felt made him look bad. Image-driven aides like Stephanopoulos worried that his discontent was being leaked to the press, which did indeed make the president look bad.³⁵

While the administration worried over how to navigate the fall-out, the daunting question of whether to retreat, or allow US commanders to outline a more concise mission to protect humanitarian aid while simultaneously bringing the warlord Aideed and his cohorts to justice, had long passed. After a long public explanation of what US forces were initially put there to do, and to justify the continuance of the peacekeeping mission for another six months, with an expressed prohibition against "vengeance," Clinton left the military engaged in the fruitless venture; only this time with a resolute call to reduce troops from 28,000 to 5,000.³⁶

US military actions are not ignored by America's enemies. Investigative journalist Gerald Posner describes how Osama Bin Laden, while in Sudan, viewed the American-led relief operation as proof of the constant need for the US to assert influence. Posner asserts that Bin Laden "dispatched Muhammad Atef, the second-in-command of al Qaeda's military unit, to Somalia to meet with local militants."³⁷ Al Qaeda members in Africa instructed Somalis on how to use mortars and trained them in explosives. Bin Laden did not initially take credit for what occurred in Somalia; in fact, he would not admit his role for another four years. However, he learned that a lack of public support and principles of leadership quickly leads to the removal of

the legendary US soldier off the battlefield. He decided that Americans had no stomach for casualties in war.³⁸

Clinton, and many in the intelligence and defense communities themselves, knew little about Osama Bin Laden at this time. It is unfair to use hindsight in order to condemn the administration's decision to pull out of this fight based on information it did not have. However, precedent does exist with regards to US military endeavors, whether successes or failures, and the messages they send to enemies lying patiently in wait, who often base their next move on American action or inaction. Western media coverage of the Tet Offensive, for example, inadvertently brought a nearly vanquished Viet Cong (VC) rival back from the brink of death, who then exploited widening rifts within the American public to gain time to rebuild and relaunch. The VC, along with their North Vietnamese Army (NVA) allies, utilized American politicians' lack of understanding as to military strategy. The enemy understood the American public, the America media, and American leaders, and used this knowledge to its devastating advantage.

During the Clinton administration, Bin Laden publicly called for Muslims worldwide to drive American soldiers from their lands.³⁹ Specifically with regards to Somalia, the terrorist said in a 1998 interview with ABC News that at the time of the Battle of Mogadishu, he and his followers were gearing up for a lengthy struggle in the Horn of Africa. Bin Laden gained revolutionary status among Islamic extremists after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, in which he embraced reports of his supposed heroic actions as a participant in "a ragged army of dedicated Muslims...[who overcame] a superpower."⁴⁰ Although his actual role is disputed, mostly among those in the US-supported Afghani Northern Alliance, who alone fought the Taliban until US forces entered Afghanistan in October of 2001, Bin Laden's carefully

constructed image spread throughout the Muslim world, and inspired extremists to join his deadly cause.

Bin Laden confirmed that the Battle of Mogadishu showed him that the US would not act as the USSR did in Afghanistan, when the Soviets fought against the Mujahedeen for almost a decade. He stated, “the United States rushed out of Somalia in shame and disgrace.”⁴¹ Seeing himself as the messenger to “bring the world to Islam”⁴² through acts of war against the world’s foremost superpower, it only confirmed his arrogant delusions of self-worth when the US pulled out of Africa without finishing its mission. Bin Laden would later taunt American viewers, “you left the area [Somalia] carrying disappointment, humiliation, defeat and your dead with you.”⁴³

Somalia altered Clinton’s idealistic foreign policy objectives with regards to multilateral peace operations and the UN. In response to the catastrophic events that occurred in Mogadishu, Clinton issued Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD-25) on May 3, 1994.⁴⁴ The policy put forth strict requirements which must be adhered to upon considering international peacekeeping operations. It includes a statement confirming that US participation in these missions “can never substitute for the necessity of winning our own wars.”⁴⁵ Although Clinton asserted that UN support can often serve as a “force multiplier,” the US would use its vote as a member of the Security Council to “take the lead in calling for them [multilateral peace operations], when member states are prepared to support the effort with forces and funds.”⁴⁶ The Clinton Administration issued this national security policy directive at a time when the debate over the use of force under a UN mandate in Bosnia raged. The PDD-25 policy also had a devastating effect on Rwanda and UN immobility during the genocidal acts of 1994. In PDD-25, Clinton advocated for a policy that directly conflicted with his internationalist aims of humanitarian

intervention and the prevention of human rights abuses, and ironically, UN Ambassador Albright was his chief salesperson for the new directive.

Clinton affirmed that the US alone would decide whether or not an operation's "political and military objectives are clear and feasible; and when UN involvement represents the best means to advance U.S. security interests."⁴⁷ In this national security directive, the president argued that although peace enforcement and UN cooperation will remain part of American security and military strategy, these operations cannot substitute for "unilateral or coalition action when that is what our national interest requires."⁴⁸ Clinton's goal here was to advocate for reform, and clarity, when it comes to UN operations. However, he also mandated a US leadership role; when large scale operations were conducted, they would fall under US command and operate in accordance with more competent regional organizations, such as NATO. These written objectives break with his past ideas of internationalist cooperation and intervention. Somalia taught Clinton a valuable lesson; one that his military advisors struggled to teach their heretofore inflexible commander. Clinton's visions of assertive multilateralism and dreams of a UN Rapid Deployment Force were now less clear.

Even Albright began to dismiss the phrase "aggressive multilateralism," which she essentially created, and truly favored, particularly with regards to civilian crises or acts of genocide. Less than two months prior to the Battle of Mogadishu, she wrote a *New York Times* op-ed in favor of tracking down and punishing Aided. She had a great stake in ensuring this new policy of working through the UN could succeed. But even prior to the tragic events in October, Somalia challenged this narrative. Up against heavy criticism over the logic of the changing mission, she stressed "Failure to take action [against Aided] would have signaled to other clan leaders that the U.N. is not serious...For Somalia's sake, and our own, we must

persevere.”⁴⁹ After the deaths of American soldiers, public cries against sacrificing US sovereignty to the corrupt, incompetent power of the UN rang wide, especially from Republicans.⁵⁰ Albright and others within the administration could not proceed unimpeded in their internationalist visions of multinational humanitarian missions and collective security. This study’s findings on Rwanda only further illustrate the challenges facing proponents of this policy. The legacy of Black Hawk Down completely encircled the administration when faced with an even deadlier humanitarian crisis.

After Somalia, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake contended that the White House was “misinformed” about the situation in Mogadishu and, therefore, did not press for a political compromise.⁵¹ But as noted by Powell, even Clinton himself admitted he did not pay a significant amount of attention to the UN change in policy, when peacekeeping morphed into a combat mission. Also, any diplomacy expended towards creating a peace agreement between factions, or supporting a central authority, would legitimize Aideed and other warlords responsible for raiding food and medicine drops and attacking UN peacekeepers. This option was not popular prior to October 3, 1993, and reached a level of impossibility after. With no real opportunities for European-style diplomatic negotiations, the condition of the Somali people, regardless of the six-month commitment of US forces, would remain dire. In the past few years, the nation has experienced modest improvements in its economic and political institutions, but still suffers from both internal and external conflict. It is currently a well-known haven for Islamic terror groups intent on attacking the US at home and abroad, such as the violent and ruthless Al-Shabaab.⁵²

Endnotes

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Chapter 4. BOSNIA AND THE “EUROPEAN PROBLEM”

Few Americans hold a firm grasp of knowledge with regards to the collapse of Yugoslavia and the eruption of violence that followed, which led to almost 300,000 deaths and two million refugees between the years of 1991 and 1995.¹ The Balkan region in Eastern Europe existed under Soviet rule during the Cold War, though Yugoslavia was unique in one respect. Under the dictatorial rule of Marshall Josip Bros Tito, who earned revolutionary status as the head of a communist-led resistance movement against Nazi occupation in WWII, a socialist-inspired nationalism served as a unifying force for the previously unstable state, mired in ethnic and territorial conflict.

After World War II, Yugoslavia was essentially recreated under Tito’s leadership; he often acted on his own accord to the frustration of many in Moscow. The basis for the postwar government, known as the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia, advocated for a federal state that would be “a voluntary union of separate peoples.”² With this notion of unity in mind, Tito advocated for a Marxist state consisting of six equal republics, each with its own president and parliament to ensure fair representation. Tito also created two autonomous regions within the Republic of Serbia. All states were to exist under his blanket leadership, first as Prime Minister, then as President for Life. The six republics included: Slovenia; Croatia; Bosnia-Herzegovina; Serbia; Montenegro; and Macedonia. The two autonomous provinces within Serbia were Vojvodina in the north, and Kosovo in the south.

Gale Stokes, a specialist on Eastern Europe and the Balkan region, argues that Yugoslav Communists often looked to the unquestioned authority of Tito to preserve the multinational federation and suppress ethnic conflicts that existed among its Roman Catholic Croats, Bosnian Muslims, and Orthodox Serbs.³ In his richly-researched work on the Eastern European

revolutions of 1989, Stokes effectively explains the foundation upon which the civil wars of the 1990s raged. During WWII, Tito's resistance movement, The Partisans, emerged victorious in a Yugoslav civil war that occurred in concurrence with the fight against Nazi Germany. As Hitler marched across Europe, Croats initiated a violent killing spree against its ethnic rivals, and forced the removal of "Serbs, Communists, Jews, Gypsies, Muslims, and others they defined as non-Croats" from their territory.⁴ Upon achieving power and legitimacy in 1945, Tito's Partisans murdered tens of thousands of Croats, while imprisoning many others.

The memories of these savage acts, in which no group could claim innocence, seethed under the surface and would later erupt. According to Stokes:

Instead of permitting the Yugoslavs to face this unpleasant past, the Communists simply condemned the horrors of the wartime experience as an extreme outburst of bourgeois society and proclaimed that such things could not happen in the new order. Any effort to confront the issues directly was forbidden...The wounds of World War II were covered over, but they never healed.⁵

Although these tensions were contained, Tito's death in 1980 served as a destabilizing event for the region. His authoritarian rule, though repressive, kept his Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia united; he was loved by a majority of the Yugoslav people. He also commanded the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), which remained dedicated to a united Yugoslavia even after his demise. To make matters worse, economic hardships plagued the country at the time of his death.⁶ As a result, the 1980s passed under a dark cloud of political, social, and financial instability. As the end of the decade approached, Yugoslavia's historical scores began to seek a settlement.

The Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s began when three of its six republics—Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia—declared independence in 1991. These acts of secession were mirrored by Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosnia) in 1992.⁷ The situation in Macedonia remained mostly

peaceful, with a dispute between the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Albanians over the newly-independent state's name being the most notable development at the time. Therefore, it remains a separate issue from the topic under consideration in this particular study.

Serbia, under the leadership of Slobodan Milošević, along with the Republic of Montenegro, strove to become the inheritors of the federal system, now in disarray, and formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).⁸ In 1990, Milošević officially came to power in Serbia by stoking ethnic hatred towards Croats and Muslims among ethnic, Orthodox Serbs. He did so not only within his own republic, but also among the minority Serb populations in neighboring states, particularly Croatia and Slovenia.⁹ Similarly, Croatia's president, Franjo Tuđman, utilized the memories of past atrocities and conflict to demonize the Serb minority among Roman Catholic Croats. Although Tuđman's hands were not clean with regards to the persecution of Serbs within an independent Croatia, it is Milošević who embarked on the most vicious crusade from the federal capital of Belgrade, located within his Serbian republic. With the JNA and its Serb members throughout the former federation willing to align with him, Milošević set out to recentralize Yugoslavia under a communist-inspired, yet nationalist ideology, concentrated within Serbia. However, Milošević's intent to destroy rival groups from areas both inside and outside of his direct authority eventually caused many non-Serbian members of the JNA to defect, and exposed his calls for a reunited Yugoslavia as a guise upon which to create a Greater Serbia.

During the early years of the break-up, American intelligence agencies relayed their findings of an impending fissure. A November 1990 *New York Times* article reported that "US intelligence is predicting...that civil-war in the multi-national Balkan country is highly likely."¹⁰ The article offered up an eighteen-month timeline before open hostilities would arise. However,

with the situation in the Middle East and Soviet disintegration top of mind, the Bush Administration did not view the crisis as one of urgent, vital interest to the US. Most Europeans agreed.

When fighting broke out in Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, countries such as Great Britain and France remained apathetic. To many Western Europeans, this violence was nothing new. In the words of British historian Tony Judt, the Balkans were viewed as “a hopeless case, a cauldron of mysterious squabbles and ancient hatreds.”¹¹ Judt contends, “What happened after [the Eastern European revolutions of] 1989 was simple: the lid having been removed, the cauldron exploded.”¹² Although the West expected unrest, and even bloodshed, it was ill-prepared for the inhumane horrors that occurred. The only firm response in the early days of this crisis, made by both the Bush Administration and its allies in the newly-declared European Union (EU), described the Balkan Wars as a “European problem.”¹³

The wars began with an attack on Slovenia by the federal Yugoslav army in 1991, but this attempt to halt the republic’s secession barely lasted two weeks, and its independence was retained. A far more intense situation arose in Croatia soon after, with the JNA backing Serb rebels, who were a minority in Tudjman’s republic. In January 1992, the UN directed a ceasefire between the independent Croatian state and the federal army, largely managed by Milošević out of Belgrade.¹⁴ Earlier in 1991, the UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo on the entire region in an attempt to diminish the number of casualties should the fighting escalate. After also applying sanctions, the UN deployed a multinational peacekeeping force. The troops, known as the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), were to oversee the ceasefire and monitor the escalating situation in Bosnia.¹⁵ UNPROFOR, barred from using force even in self-defense, would prove largely ineffective in the face of escalating violence among the Serbs, Croats, and

Bosnian Muslims, as well as against Milošević's nationalist aims. Many Bosnians mocked the impotent UNPROFOR as "the UN *Self-Protection Force* (author's emphasis)."¹⁶

The ethnic composition of Bosnia, which was the most diverse of the Yugoslav republics, was approximately forty-three percent Muslim, thirty-five percent Serbian, and eighteen percent Croatian.¹⁷ When Bosnia made its move for independence under its Muslim president, Alija Izetbegović, the Bosnian Serbs strongly rejected it. But they were still in the minority, despite their significant numbers. With Serbia now virtually leading what was left of the Yugoslav Federation, the Serbs in Bosnia wanted to remain part of a larger, Serb-dominated nation rather than become a powerless minority in a smaller republic led by their ancient rivals. Conversely, Bosnian Muslims and Croats rejected the idea of their own marginalization by remaining part of a now Serb-dominated Yugoslav federation. With Milošević's blessing and backing, and supported by the JNA, Bosnian Serb paramilitary forces began what would come to be called "ethnic cleansing"¹⁸ of Muslims and Croats who shared their homeland. For many critics of US ambivalence on Bosnia, the term "ethnic cleansing" is seen as a less offensive, less urgent description of what occurred, which was outright genocide.

With only the UNPROFOR standing in the way, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and its capital city of Sarajevo, became the site of the most savage atrocities committed against civilians since WWII. Upon the passing of the secession referendum put forth by Bosnian President Izetbegović in the spring of 1992, the Bosnian Serbs launched a campaign of murder, rape, torture, imprisonment, and expulsion under the orders of politician Radovan Karadžić, but with the guiding hand of Milošević.¹⁹ In response to Bosnia's move towards independence from the Yugoslav Federation, Karadžić led a political movement among Bosnian Serbs to formerly detach from the independent Bosnia-Herzegovina government and establish its own entity within

Bosnia, known as Republika Srpska (Serb Republic). The Bosnian Serbs saw Sarajevo as their stated capital, and under Karadžić's leadership, opted to remain part of the Yugoslav Federation of Serbia and Montenegro. The JNA covertly enlisted Serb paramilitary forces to combat what Milošević and his followers viewed as an attempt by Bosnian Muslims, as well as Bosnian Croats, to decrease Serbian influence within a new nation comprised of heavily populated Serb territories.²⁰

Violence broke out in April of 1992, when Serb snipers fired into a crowd of anti-war demonstrators in support of an independent, multi-national Bosnia. From the top of a Holiday Inn, the gunmen shot at thousands of peaceful attendees, without concern for who they maimed or killed. Soon after, the Serb paramilitary forces "pounded the city" of Sarajevo with heavy artillery.²¹ These militia members, who would form the Bosnian Serb Army, expected to take Sarajevo within days, and Bosnia proper within months. The JNA was not officially responsible for the attacks, but only according to Milošević. Those JNA members who did exit the region left their weapons and artillery behind for the Bosnian Serb militia. This move, directed by Milošević, aimed to prevent international claims of a centralized Serbian directive with pronounced JNA intervention.²² However, former Yugoslav Army officers took control of those Serbs willing to fight in Bosnia. Most of them were Serb army officers within the JNA who Milošević ordered to "return and organize."²³ In a move that would have disastrous consequences, former JNA Lieutenant Colonel Ratko Mladić placed himself in charge of the Bosnian Serb forces to oversee the brutal attacks.²⁴

Mladić did his job with devastating precision. To ensure the complete removal of Muslims in particular, the Serbs forced Muslim men to rape their own daughters, mothers to watch their children's throats being slit, and erected concentration camps reminiscent of the

Holocaust as a means to imprison their rivals prior to their inevitable executions.²⁵ The Serbs aimed to ensure the Bosnian Muslims who did survive would never want to return to their former homes. Many of these relayed incidences were based on stories told by those who escaped the rampage, or aid and human rights workers on the ground. It was not until journalists were able to document some of the atrocities with visual confirmation, specifically mass graves and images of the detention camps, that international pressure for action built.²⁶ Towards the end of the 1992 election, the issue gained some ground in the US, and in retrospect, registers as a negative in the waning days of the Bush Administration. From 1992 through 1995, the war in Bosnia loomed, with evidence of genocidal actions frequently reaching the highest levels of the US government. From the moment of his inauguration, President Bill Clinton and his administration's "day-to-day crisis management approach"²⁷ to the publicized atrocities displayed an absence of willpower, even when they finally devised a credible strategy.

The UN arms embargo had the greatest impact on Bosnian Muslims. The JNA had its own arsenal prior to the ban on the sale of weapons to the region, and the Bosnian Serb Army were the recipients of this advantage. Milošević presented any violence committed by the Bosnian Serbs as the actions of an autonomous entity, and attempted to detach them from any associations with his Serbian republic or the JNA.²⁸ However, he later admitted that his public pronouncements to the international community on the supposed independence of the Bosnian Serb Army was a ruse to "reduce the severity of the sanctions"²⁹ put in place by the UN against the Yugoslav Federation and Serbia. From his Belgrade capital, illegal arms were sent via trucks and unauthorized flights between Serbia and Bosnia.³⁰

Those targeted by the Serb attacks had little with regards to any significant means of protection or possible countermeasures. Although the Croatians benefitted somewhat from arms

illegally purchased by neighboring countries, such as Hungary, the well dried up, and they, too, were at a significant disadvantage. For this reason, during the 1992 campaign, Clinton argued in favor of lifting the ban in order to level the playing field and put a halt to the slaughter.³¹

In his attempt to alter voters' opinions, Clinton "took on a somewhat more aggressive tack than President Bush"³² with regards to Bosnia. During the 1992 campaign, Americans were bombarded with televised and printed images of the horrors committed by the Bosnian Serb Army, particularly its consistent shelling of heavily populated areas in Sarajevo. As noted, the Bush Administration viewed the issue as a "European problem," and tried to settle the dispute diplomatically. Candidate Clinton rebuked the president's approach as lacking any action, and encouraged the US to "consider using military force to open Serbian detention camps and...lifting the arms embargo."³³ However, once president, Clinton ignored his own advice, even as the number of deaths reached 100,000. He thus reneged on the only foreign policy criticism of the Bush Administration that held real weight.

Clinton understood upon his taking the oath of office that Serb forces used mortars to shell innocent civilians in cities, raped women and young girls, executed entire families, and destroyed homes.³⁴ Secretary of State Warren Christopher issued a statement listing the many atrocities committed by the Serbs as early as February of 1993, but his solutions were quite weak, and did not echo those put forth by his boss prior to the November 3rd election. Christopher tepidly swore to "bring the full weight of American diplomacy to bear on finding a peaceful solution."³⁵ He gave no ultimatum, and offered no threat of using military force. For a group responsible for "mass murders, systematic beatings...prolonged shellings of innocents in Sarajevo...forced displacements of entire villages, [and] inhuman treatment of prisoners in

detention camps,”³⁶ Christopher’s words relayed the stalemate occurring both within the administration and among its allies.

At this time, the death toll continued to rise. It was open season. By 1993, Bosnian Serb forces held the capital city of Sarajevo and its Bosnian-Muslim government under siege. According to Samantha Power, who most recently served as President Obama’s UN Ambassador, “Saving Bosnian lives was not deemed worth risking U.S. soldiers or challenging America’s European allies who wanted to remain neutral.”³⁷ At the very moment Clinton gained the most powerful position in the world, he diluted this power by miring himself in international intransigence, internal indecision, and a subservience to polling.

One of the primary reasons for the absence of US leadership in Bosnia came from debates within the administration. Colin Powell, who held onto his Bush-appointed position as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs for nine months into Clinton’s first term, and thus served as the president’s paramount military advisor, expressed concern over US intervention. His distrust of assuming a “limited” role, particularly one engaged in civil warfare, was shaped by his experiences in Vietnam. As noted by Power in her book on America’s history with regards to genocide, “The one-word bogey ‘Vietnam’ became the ubiquitous shorthand for all that could go wrong in the Balkans if the United States became militarily engaged.”³⁸ This association certainly remained top of mind for the highly-decorated Vietnam Veteran. When speaking to a *New York Times* reporter in 1992, while still working with the Bush Administration, Powell stated, “As soon as they tell me it’s limited, it means they do not care whether you achieve a result or not. As soon as they tell me ‘surgical,’ I head for the bunker.”³⁹ Powell’s criticism of confining US military strength to ineffective, constrained air strikes and an ill-defined presence is understandable. Neither Bush, nor Clinton, would present a clear objective.

Powell set the stage for the dissent that would occur among Clinton's national security advisors. Representing the men and women who would be asked to enter into harm's way, Powell echoed some European sentiments regarding the ancient ethnic rivalries at the root of the violence. But he also vowed to repeat the overwhelming military effort he put forth in Desert Storm should the president firmly decide to go in; again, only with a well-defined strategy in place. In the absence of this directive, and instead presented with civilian suggestions for "a little surgical bombing or a limited attack," Powell noted how history betrays those who present an approach of increased escalation once the "desired result [of limited intervention] isn't obtained."⁴⁰ Again, Powell referred to Vietnam.

Powell's voice on this matter angered those who supported the US taking on a more active role. The most notable confrontation arose between Powell and UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright. Albright contends that Powell was intractable when it came to a bombing campaign or the possible interjection of ground troops. She describes how the much-admired general consistently asserted that he viewed the proposal of intervention as an open-ended commitment. Therefore, he would not even consider entering the region without a decisive force, including thousands of troops. Albright notes his answer to her many suggestions as a repetitive "No can do."⁴¹ Albright exploded: "What are you saving this superb military for, Colin, if we can't use it?"⁴² Powell similarly describes this altercation with Albright, and notes his reaction to her sarcastic question as one of infuriation. He felt as though the UN Ambassador and others who supported her position viewed America's military force as "toy soldiers to be moved around on some sort of global game board."⁴³ His lack of enthusiasm for what was being proposed on Bosnia, specifically, angered him because no diplomatic objectives existed to warrant a sufficient military commitment.

Powell could not, and would not, present a battle plan without clarity in stated political goals to accompany whatever military presence the US agreed upon. In this respect, National Security Advisor Tony Lake backed up Powell. As noted, Vietnam Syndrome often came in direct conflict with Munich Syndrome. Lake told Albright, “the kinds of questions Colin is asking...are exactly the ones the military never asked during Vietnam.”⁴⁴ In the experienced mind of Powell, a civilian, Washington-directed “war” with limited engagement and a confused political strategy could not proceed without the voicing of his stern objections. When Clinton asked Powell soon after his inauguration what could be done through airpower, the president made sure to stress the caveat of “something not too punitive.”⁴⁵ The general rightly interpreted the president’s naïve question as “let’s not hurt anybody.”⁴⁶ He gave Clinton the same answer he would repeat endlessly until he retired at the end of September in 1993. Powell’s replacement as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Lieutenant General John Shalikashvili, slightly improved on the relationship between the military and Clinton. However, upon his succession, Shalikashvili remarked “What took place at that moment (Bosnia) was what I would call a holiday from leadership.”⁴⁷ The Clinton Administration’s unwillingness to lead their hesitant European allies towards a proper, effective solution surprised the new chairman. To him, the traditional role played by the US did not exist during this crisis.

Lake himself offered no real alternative either. Although most of his time as Clinton’s National Security Advisor was spent on Bosnia, Lake’s position seemingly involved holding endless meetings where high-level officials within the administration would vent or pontificate on the matter, then leave with no significant progress having been made. Lake favored intervention, but given his status as a civilian, he refrained from pushing his viewpoint. In these meetings, he often opted for humanitarian aid and diplomacy. One high-level official

complained, “It wasn’t policy-making. It was group therapy—an existential debate over what is the role of America.”⁴⁸

According to Strobe Talbott, an old friend of Clinton’s from his Rhodes Scholar days and another critic of the Vietnam War who served in the administration, the president was frustrated by what he deemed “incoherent” strategies from his foreign policy team.⁴⁹ Secretary of State Christopher worried about Bosnia weighing down Clinton’s domestic achievements with a human rights disaster overseas. The president’s domestic agenda was so broad, and demanded so much time and effort, he had little insight into what was required to confront the escalating situation in Europe. In response to the televised images of the siege of Sarajevo, Clinton angrily told Talbott: “Some people are saying don’t just stand there, do something, but others are saying don’t do something, just stand there.”⁵⁰

Christopher was not known to be a stern, forceful diplomat, nor was he considered a man of action. In May of 1993, when he embarked on a task to convince European allies to endorse a “lift and strike” proposal put forth by Clinton, which consisted of finally lifting the arms embargo and initiating NATO air strikes against the Serbs, Christopher could not sell it.⁵¹ A NATO official present during a meeting between Christopher and the NATO secretary-general Manfred Woerner noted the Secretary of State’s “singular lack of enthusiasm” for lift and strike.⁵² When he returned, Christopher described the meeting as a “healthy exchange of ideas”⁵³ between his European counterparts and himself. Also in tow was the allies’ outright dismissal of the president’s proposed course of action. A little over a year later, Tony Lake traveled to Europe to present an enhanced version of this plan himself, but with determination and the promise of a US troop presence behind it. This time it sold, but only after tens of thousands more innocent Bosnian civilians lost their lives.

In his assessment of the war in the Persian Gulf, Clinton's first Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, along with ranking Republican Member of the House Armed Services Committee, Representative William Dickinson, published one important finding, which is applicable to any discussion of the use of military force in a particular arena. They found, based on the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, which in essence assured that all services of the military were fighting the same war, "There was a single chain of command with a clear-cut distinction between military and civilian roles with the theater commander in chief in unmistakable control over combat forces."⁵⁴ Aspin, who was surely no hawk, notes that "The decisive factor in the war with Iraq [Operation Desert Storm/ Shield] was the air campaign, but ground forces were necessary to eject the Iraqis from Kuwait."⁵⁵ During his tenure, Aspin advocated for committing US-led NATO forces in Bosnia under similar conditions, though on a smaller scale.⁵⁶ However, he remained Secretary of Defense under Clinton for less than a year. Aspin resigned due to his inadequate response to equipment requests from his commanders in Somalia and the tragedy that followed. But the point made in his Gulf War assessment compliments Powell's mindset. Even though the confrontation in Bosnia was a bit more complex, and unconventional, it nevertheless required more than just sporadic NATO airstrikes. It would take Clinton until 1995 to learn this lesson.

In February 1994, Bosnian Serbs utilized heavy artillery to shell a Sarajevo marketplace, which killed sixty-eight innocent shopkeepers and patrons, and severely wounded hundreds more.⁵⁷ The Clinton Administration forcefully condemned the aggressors, with tough talk about the resolve of NATO. In April, after a brief respite in the shelling of the Bosnian capital, the NATO allies punished the Serbs "with 'pinprick' air strikes—usually a single strike against aged Serb military hardware delivered with plenty of warning."⁵⁸ Due to the typical Serb response to

any NATO activity, which often involved raising the frequency and gruesomeness of attacks towards Muslim civilians, and even taking UN peacekeepers as hostages, the US and NATO members always capitulated. Karadžić, the political leader of the Republika Srpska, even went so far as to brazenly announce to international decision-makers his directions to shoot down NATO planes and capture UNPROFOR troops if strikes persisted.⁵⁹ It was this consistent Serbian response to limited and often inconsequential airstrikes that prevented any increase in military intervention. Ironically, it was out of concern for the lives of UN peacekeepers on the ground that hundreds of thousands of Bosnians lost their own. The peacekeeping force either needed to be protected by ground troops, or removed from their mission to pave the way for actual military intervention.

One example of Clinton's ineptitude on the Bosnia issue comes from his attempt to persuade French President Jacques Chirac to present an argument to the US president's own Congress against lifting the ban; a ban he himself opposed while a candidate in 1992. Clinton also wanted Chirac's help with the legislature to raise funds for the increased protection of the rather ineffective UN peacekeeping troops in Bosnia. After keeping the French leader occupied for almost two hours in a meeting with Republican Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who each favored lifting the ban and arming the Bosnian Muslims, Chirac sarcastically announced "the position of leader of the free world was 'vacant'."⁶⁰

After a short ceasefire in the first few months of 1995, the situation reached the point of no return in the late spring months and into the summer. The president had to act, though it would take him months to implement a policy that would yield any ramifications for the primary Bosnian aggressors and deliver a ceasefire. Some in his administration even excused the delay as a response to reports of equivalence between Muslims, Croats, and Serbs with regards to the

atrocities committed. The CIA fought back against this false assessment of Serb cruelty with intelligence reports that confirmed approximately ninety percent of the genocidal actions were committed by the Bosnian Serb Army and Serb militias. In a statement by CIA Deputy Director John Gannon, reports of “rape, torture, and murder”⁶¹ in UN-designated “safe areas,”⁶² such as Srebrenica,⁶³ a small village near the eastern border with Serbia, further warranted the need for American power. Gannon notes:

The Bosnian Serb assaults have displaced tens of thousands of Muslims [from the supposed UN-protected “safe areas”], led to the detention of perhaps several thousand more, and resulted in the apparent purposeful deaths of at least several hundred—a number that could increase to thousands as we learn more.⁶⁴

The report also confirms the mysterious absence of almost 6,000 Muslim refugees from Srebrenica, mostly men and boys, most of whom were assumed dead. This number would rise to approximately 8,000 murdered Muslim males as more evidence poured in. These UN-designated safe areas, set up in 1993 by the Security Council and protected by UNPROFOR, were considered by the international community as off limits with regards to Serbian aggression.⁶⁵ The Serbs, apparently, finally crossed the line.

Political calculations also played a role in Clinton’s decision to finally intervene with actions he championed while a candidate. Much of the White House staff were obsessed with political fallout, such as George Stephanopoulos, David Gergen, and Dick Morris. Morris, the president’s primary pollster and political advisor, opposed Clinton taking any action in Bosnia, advising “You don’t want to be a Lyndon Johnson...sacrificing your potential for doing good on the domestic front by a destructive, never-ending foreign involvement.”⁶⁶ In 1994, Morris’s polling solidified Clinton’s worries regarding public support for military intervention. About forty percent of Americans reflected an isolationist mindset, with just thirty-seven percent supporting the idea of the US acting as a peacemaker to resolve disputes.⁶⁷ But as the bloodshed

continued, particularly in UN safe zones like Srebrenica, public opinion made a slight shift in favor of US military action.

To add to Clinton's political concerns, Republican Senator Bob Dole of Kansas became an outspoken proponent of using force to stop the carnage. After Secretary of State Christopher's fruitless trip to Europe in an attempt to sell the president's "lift-and-strike" policy, Dole noted that Clinton "finally came up with a 'realistic' Bosnia policy," but then abandoned it "when [European] consensus did not magically appear on his doorstep."⁶⁸ Dole fought tirelessly to convince Congress to force the president's hand. As Senate Majority Leader in the summer of 1995, he sold the Senate on a bill ending American support for the arms embargo, while giving a timeline for the UN to remove its peacekeeping forces out of harm's way. Since the Bosnian Serbs often took UNPROFOR troops hostage in response to air strikes, this action would clear the way for NATO attacks as well.

In a bipartisan measure, both the House and Senate voted to revoke the ban on arms sales to Bosnia in an attempt to aid the Muslims under attack. In August of 1995, President Clinton vetoed Dole's successful legislation to unilaterally lift the arms embargo. As noted, Clinton's reluctance arose from the presence of UN peacekeepers, and the Serbian willingness to take them as hostages or even harm them physically in retaliation for NATO military intervention. But given the attack on UN-designated safe areas and peacekeepers in the summer of 1995, the UN mission was already heading towards total failure. Clinton believed differently. He promised to lift the embargo "in the event the United Nations mission failed and withdrew."⁶⁹ Apparently, Clinton set a low bar for success. He also warned that "unilaterally ending the United States role in the embargo would damage mutual security agreements with allies."⁷⁰ Since the argument against the embargo, and significant NATO air strikes, was built upon the danger it would

present to peacekeepers on the ground—mostly Canadian, French, British, Spanish, and Dutch forces—Clinton held out.

Here is where undaunted, principled American leadership in world affairs must come in to play. Particularly at this time, Clinton should have been the one forming the agreements and setting the tone for multilateral participation. He should have sold lift-and-strike to his European allies in 1993. In 1995, when he ran out of new ways to stall, Clinton actually did persuade European leaders to follow a similar plan, and gave it credibility with the addition of US forces.⁷¹ As noted, he sent Tony Lake to do the job Secretary of State Christopher could not, or would not, do. But prior to the atrocities of 1995, Clinton punted. Instead of leading, he followed. However, once Senator Dole positioned himself as Clinton's probable Republican opponent for the 1996 election, the president's stance began to change. The change could not come soon enough.

On August 25, 1995, the Serbs launched another mortar attack on a Sarajevo marketplace, killing dozens of civilians.⁷² In response, NATO launched Operation Deliberate Force, which was a concerted air campaign attacking Serbian military positions. Prior to this point, NATO intervention consisted of three years of satellite monitoring, securing a no-fly zone over Bosnia (Operation Deny Flight), and limited air strikes aimed at military targets, such as Serb ammunition depots.⁷³ By the summer of 1995, the Serbs became especially adept at responding to the air attacks by threatening UN peacekeepers. In May, Mladić took 350 UNPROFOR troops hostage and held them as human shields in order to put a halt to any additional bombing of his artillery positions from which he launched mortar attacks and held Sarajevo, along with its airport, under siege.⁷⁴ Out of frustration for this repeated, dangerous game played by the Bosnian Serbs, Clinton finally pressured the UN to authorize NATO to

conduct a twelve-day air campaign accompanied by NATO ground forces. These punitive actions severely weakened the Serbs, who were at this point also fighting against a united coalition of Croatians and Muslims.⁷⁵

On August 30th, “more than sixty aircraft, flying from bases in Italy and the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Adriatic, pounded Bosnian Serb positions around Sarajevo...[with] French and British artillery joined in.”⁷⁶ As the mission’s chief hawk, Madeleine Albright notes how the “psychological balance” of the conflict changed almost overnight.⁷⁷ The Bosnian Serbs could no longer act without severe consequences. Operation Deliberate Force softened the earth for a ceasefire agreement.

The man charged with the diplomatic challenge of bringing a close to the brutal war that left almost 300,000 dead was Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Richard Holbrooke. Holbrooke held a unique stake in the matter. He visited Sarajevo for the first time as a nineteen-year-old in 1960, and in 1992, returned for the first time in over thirty years during the early stages of “ethnic cleansing” brought about by Bosnian Serbs. During this second trip, Holbrooke witnessed the city he once saw as a “cosmopolitan combination of Muslim, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox cultures,” even while under Soviet rule, condemned as a “desperate hellhole, under heavy mortar, artillery, and sniper attacks.”⁷⁸ In the summer of 1995, when he was tapped to head negotiations towards a ceasefire between the Serbs, Muslims, and Croatians at war in Bosnia, he understood his task as a pragmatic yet imperfect one,⁷⁹ with the multicultural existence of the past eviscerated by unimaginable evils.

Holbrooke’s determination to bring an end to the violence increased dramatically when three of his American colleagues were killed during a diplomatic visit in August. As part of a US delegation sent to promote a peace initiative, the three diplomats, along with a French

soldier, perished when their armored personnel carrier fell 400 yards off of a dangerous road into a ravine.⁸⁰ Holbrooke briefly returned to the US to escort the bodies of his friends home, and then quickly resumed his work in their honor.

Since the earliest days of the war, Holbrooke argued against the decision to turn the issue over to Europe and the UN instead of NATO.⁸¹ With NATO finally making progress in the region, and Serb losses on the ground, he felt he could achieve a settlement on an issue that consumed his attention for three years. Yet, given the level of atrocities committed during the war, it was highly unlikely he would reach a ceasefire if demands for justice and territory made against the Serbs were met.⁸² He feared a Serb reprisal, because they remained indignant when presented with the atrocities they committed.

After several meetings with representatives from the three ethnic groups within Bosnia, Holbrooke held a diplomatic conference in Dayton, Ohio, a neutral site in the US. The conference included Alija Izetbegović, the president of the independent Bosnia-Herzegovina; Croatian President Franjo Tudjman; and Milošević, who represented Karadžić's Republika Srpska. The November meetings produced a peace agreement officially signed by all parties in Paris in December 1995, which Clinton and his European allies welcomed. However, the Dayton Accords, as they came to be called, served as a tenuous ceasefire which essentially partitioned Bosnia, and transformed the man considered most responsible for the genocidal actions of the Bosnian Serb Army into a credible statesman.⁸³ According to journalist Richard Sale, the Clinton Administration considered it vital that Milošević remain in power. Clinton felt he needed some central Serb authority figure with whom to deal. The president would come to regret this decision when Milošević once again struck out against the Albanians in Kosovo during his second term.⁸⁴

The most notable consequence of the Dayton Accords was the creation of two self-governing entities within Bosnia: the Bosnian Serb Republic and the Croat-Muslim Federation. The Serbs received forty-one percent of Bosnian land, with the Croat-Muslim Federation receiving a fifty-one percent majority.⁸⁵ Each republic retained its own president, parliament, and army. The agreement also created a US-led NATO operation to preserve the ceasefire. As noted by Holbrooke, the broker of the peace settlement, “belatedly and reluctantly, the United States came to intervene and...brought the war in Bosnia to an end.”⁸⁶ Also, the UN lifted the sanctions put upon the Yugoslav Federation (Serbia and Montenegro) when it followed through with elections one year after the agreement was signed.⁸⁷

In a speech on the Dayton Accords, given in November of 1995, Clinton announced the commitment of 20,000 US troops to preserve the shaky ceasefire agreement between the Muslims, Croatians, and Serbs of Bosnia.⁸⁸ The settlement initially arranged in Dayton, and negotiated by Holbrooke, consisted of a commitment to peace and to the preserved unity of Bosnia as a single state. Included in the Dayton Accords was a mandate to prosecute war criminals, which exposes its hollowness, as one of the signatories was Milošević himself. The words spoken by Clinton undoubtedly brought little comfort to victims of Serb atrocities, or the surviving family members of those slaughtered. He stated:

Implementing the agreement in Bosnia can end the terrible suffering of the people, the warfare, the mass executions, the ethnic cleansing, the campaigns of rape and terror. Let us never forget a quarter of a million men, women, and children have been shelled, shot, and tortured to death. Two million people...were forced from their homes and into a miserable life as refugees. And these faceless numbers hide millions of real personal tragedies. For each of the war's victims was a mother or daughter, a father or son, a brother or sister. Now the war is over. American leadership created the chance to build a peace and stop the suffering.⁸⁹

The president was exactly right. American leadership did bring about peace. It did put a halt to the killing, to the rape, and to the systematic violence. And American soldiers would, at least temporarily, protect that peace...now that the slaughter was over. Clinton's second Secretary of Defense, William Perry, openly criticized the president on his hesitant commitment to the pursuit of peace in Bosnia. In his statement in favor of calling on NATO early on, Perry argued, "we should have been prepared to use or to threaten to use military force from the beginning."⁹⁰

Under the terms of the Dayton Accords, NATO deployed an Implementation Force (IFOR) comprised of approximately 60,000 troops from member as well as non-member nations.⁹¹ As stated by Clinton, the US contributed 20,000 American soldiers. US Admiral Leighton Smith, who served as head of the US Naval Forces in Europe as well as commander of the Allied Forces in Southern Europe, led the NATO occupation force. The goal of IFOR was to preserve the ceasefire outlined at Dayton, and monitor the armies and weapons of all parties within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. IFOR also oversaw the safe transfer of territory and return of refugees. After one year, in 1996, a NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) replaced IFOR, and the troop size was reduced.⁹² Under Admiral Smith, NATO expanded its role to include providing security for elections and assisting in the apprehension of war criminals. However, Smith took heavy criticism for the hands-off manner in which both the IFOR and SFOR troops engaged in peacekeeping, which many felt allowed too much freedom and opportunity for mischief by the Serbs.⁹³

Holbrooke himself chastised one aspect of the Dayton Accords, which he determined to be "insufficiently aggressive."⁹⁴ The deficiency, according to the diplomat, was the failure to capture Radovan Karadžić, the Bosnian Serb political leader, or Ratko Mladić, who orchestrated the massacre in Srebrenica, both of whom the International Criminal Tribunal for the former

Yugoslavia (ICTY) indicted for crimes against humanity and genocide. Karadžić was finally imprisoned and charged in 2008. He was convicted in 2016 of committing war crimes and genocide. He is currently serving a forty-year sentence.⁹⁵ Mladić, too, evaded justice for almost sixteen years after the war. Arrested in 2011, the man known as the “Butcher of Bosnia”⁹⁶ began his trial in 2012, primarily for the incomprehensible actions he took during the 1995 massacres in Srebrenica.⁹⁷ Milošević himself, who was essentially given immunity by the Dayton Accords, would not be arrested until 2001, after his second attempt at ethnic cleansing in Kosovo failed. The international community finally had enough when, as president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Milošević forced the removal of almost 800,000 Albanians from the autonomous province of Kosovo, and killed thousands more, including women and children.⁹⁸ Unlike Bosnia, Clinton met Milošević’s actions in a more timely manner, perhaps due to the lessons the president learned during his first term. The UN finally brought Milošević up on charges of war crimes leading back to the conflict with Croatia and his role in the Bosnian slaughter. In 2006, he died of a heart attack while imprisoned at The Hague awaiting trial.⁹⁹

One of the primary reasons for the improvements in this Eastern European region was the prolonged presence of US and NATO forces. After Clinton removed the time limit for the departure of US troops,¹⁰⁰ the American role in Bosnia would not end until December 2, 2004. For nine years, the NATO-led SFOR, consisting of over 500,000 members from 43 nations, including 90,000 Americans, delivered stability to the former Yugoslavia.¹⁰¹ This contingency brought back economic and political ties to Bosnia, and prevented the existence of “a Korea-like demilitarized zone between the Serbs and Muslims,”¹⁰² which many of Holbrooke’s critics feared. Today, only a small force of Americans remain in Sarajevo at the Bosnian capital’s US-led NATO headquarters.

Some analysts refer to Clinton's actions in 1995 as proof of his capability as a leader on foreign policy. To his credit, he did announce the deployment of American troops and sent them into harm's way on the eve of an election year, which could have cost him his re-election bid had the intervention gone sour. However, according to Morton Abramowitz, a former State Department official and President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace during the Clinton years, "It's wrong to say something is a success when there was massive 'ethnic cleansing' and two million people displaced."¹⁰³ Abramowitz contends that the intervention of NATO and the ensuing Dayton Accords merely "suspended the war for the election; it didn't create a peace."¹⁰⁴ It is unclear just how much of a role the 1996 election drove Clinton's sudden jump to action, but it is not out of line to suggest politics played a decisive role.

Abramowitz's harsh criticism over the possible politics of Clinton's move on Bosnia does not stand alone. But more objective assessments of the president's actions, or rather, his reluctance to act in this particular case, emphasize his initial abandonment of a well-structured policy idea in "lift and strike" due to European and UN entrenchment. The US president must persuade. He or she must lead, especially in world affairs. This reality also rings true when it comes to internal infighting within a presidential administration. Advisors are present to advise. The president makes the ultimate decision. Inexperience is one reason Clinton took as long as he did to understand the situation, challenge the UN and European allies, and make the right call. His focus on other issues, mostly domestic in nature, and his inattention to the continuing crisis in Bosnia is another. The specter of Vietnam and Somalia also figured into his thinking. Clinton's worries about damning US forces to an open-ended commitment in a country mired in civil war undoubtedly affected his judgement. However, the president would not make the same mistake when tensions once again flared in Kosovo in 1999. To the historian, it appears as

though Clinton became more pragmatic and confident, and learned a valuable lesson from his delayed reaction to human tragedy. Through his immediate deployment of NATO to once again stop Milošević, one can deduce that he finally understood how American capabilities to right the ship can be efficiently unleashed. But the narrative of the president's supposed evolution in foreign affairs becomes complicated when examining other national security issues that arose during his tenure. Clinton's absence of resolve with regards to direct attacks on US interests, and his indifference to the rising tide of terror, tops this list.

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⁸⁴ Sale, *Clinton’s Secret Wars*, 151.

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Chapter 5. RWANDA: A GENOCIDE IGNORED

During a visit to the Central African nation of Rwanda in 1998, President Bill Clinton addressed Rwandese government officials and survivors of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide with a somber admission: “We did not act quickly enough after the killing began.”¹ In what is now regarded as one of the most chilling human rights disasters in modern history, the world and its foremost superpower refused to answer the door when decimation knocked. In a span of three months, almost one million Rwandans lost their lives in a premeditated, gruesome act of genocide which stunned the global community.² Nations with the greatest capacity to intervene, most notably the US, claimed ignorance as the reason for the vacancy of any attempts to impede the mass murder engulfing Rwanda either before or after its springtime start.³ But evidence of American knowledge and capability betrays this excuse, and illustrates what can occur without resolute US leadership on the international stage.

To understand what occurred during approximately one hundred bloodstained days in 1994, one must first grasp the underlying divisions separating those who committed the barbarous acts from those on the receiving end. Rwanda is located within Central Africa, bordered on the west by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, and Burundi to the south. It is primarily comprised of two ethnic groups: the Hutu, who form the overwhelming majority, and the Tutsi, who before the genocide, accounted for about seventeen percent of the population.⁴ Prior to the colonial era, when European nations participated in the late nineteenth-century “Scramble for Africa,”⁵ and imperial ambitions overcame the sovereignty of many African nations and territories, the Hutu and Tutsi lived within a Tutsi-ruled kingdom. The majority Hutu were agricultural, and worked the land, while the Tutsi were nomadic cow herders. The Tutsi eventually settled into the Hutu-populated

region of Rwanda, given its proximity to the Central African Great Lakes region, and adopted Hutu language and customs.⁶

The foundation of differences between the two groups relies heavily on economic factors rather than any variations in ethnicity or culture. The Tutsi, who represented a minority of the population, raised cattle, which granted them a higher status in comparison to the Hutu, who were overwhelmingly farmers.⁷ As journalist Ryszard Kapuszinski explains, “The more cattle one had, the richer one was; the richer one was, the more power one had. The [Tutsi] king owned the most cattle, and his herds were under special protection.”⁸ For this reason, the Tutsi held onto a prominent position of wealth and privilege, regardless of their significantly smaller numbers. In a sense, the relationship between the Hutu and the Tutsi was reminiscent of Middle Ages feudalism, even though daily interaction and even intermarriage was commonplace. The Tutsi landowners allowed the Hutu to work the land in exchange for security and food, thus placing the Tutsi into a position of superiority.⁹

The elevated stature of the Tutsi continued once Rwanda and its southern neighbor, Burundi, fell under Belgian control in 1916. Belgium gained the territory, which it held as a combined state, from Germany after its defeat in World War I. Like Somalia, Ruanda-Burundi, as it was known, would later become a UN trust territory under continued Belgian authority.¹⁰ Hutu resentment of Tutsi wealth and political power stewed as the Belgians treated the Tutsi with advantages denied to the lesser Hutu. With a move that only worsened relations, the European colonizers demanded their subjects carry identification cards meant to distinguish the two groups, which labeled their carriers as either Tutsi or Hutu.¹¹ While under colonial rule, the identification cards served the Tutsi quite well, but antagonized the Hutu. As a result, during the transition period leading up to the end of Belgium rule, when both Rwanda and Burundi would

gain independence as two separate nations, the Hutu not only sought to assume greater influence within the new Rwandan state; they sought revenge.

Beginning in 1959, the Hutu initiated a brutal overthrow of Tutsi dominance, and gained control of the now sovereign nation of Rwanda. Many Tutsis fled to surrounding states, like Uganda, which had its own problems with violence and chaos.¹² Others were murdered. Several subsequent Tutsi attempts to reclaim their authority were met with continued bloodshed. In the years immediately following independence, the Hutu killed approximately 20,000 Tutsi and forced 300,000 out of their homes and into neighboring countries.¹³ After decades of Rwanda existing under sole Hutu control, Tutsi refugees in Uganda, many of them who were the children of those either killed or displaced during the cruel transition period, created the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) to take back their former lands by force. Operating alongside its political arm, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the Tutsi rebel military invaded Rwanda in October of 1990.¹⁴ The RPA clashed with Hutu-led forces under Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana, and a civil war commenced.

Habyarimana gained dictatorial power in Rwanda after he orchestrated a military coup in 1973 and established the Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développement, or the National Republican Movement for Development and Democracy (MRND). The MRND existed as the nation's sole political party, and ruled largely from its hub of power located within the northwest region of Rwanda. As the fight with the RPA intensified, two groups whose Hutu members would play significant roles during the upcoming genocide formed out of the MRND. In 1992, Hutu hardliners within the MRND created a radical branch, known as the Coalition pour la Défense de la République, or the Coalition for the Defense of the Republic (CDR). The MRND also encouraged the development of the youth wing of the party,

which would come to be known as the much-feared Interahamwe.¹⁵ Both the CDR and Interahamwe were considered militia organizations, and their increasingly extremist members viewed any mercy displayed towards Tutsi invaders as acts of betrayal.

But the minority Tutsi force was neither inept nor weak. After years spent in Uganda, where the Tutsis lived in exile in the midst of civil unrest amongst the Ugandans themselves, guerrilla forces trained many RPA members. The guerrillas prepared the Rwandan Tutsis to assist with a coup against their own Ugandan government in 1986.¹⁶ For this reason, the Tutsi, though smaller in size, gained significant ground in their fight against Habyarimana's Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) despite heavy losses. In the minds of hopeful peace brokers within the international community, this advantage increased the possibilities of securing a ceasefire once exterior diplomatic forces intervened.

While the bloody internal war raged on, many human rights workers, specifically from the International Red Cross and Human Rights Watch, consistently urged for outside intervention. In 1993, the Organization for African Unity (OAU), along with France and the US, orchestrated the Arusha Accords, which ushered in a tenuous ceasefire.¹⁷ The Arusha Accords attempted to deliver a political solution not only to the immediate hostilities under way, but also to the centuries' long resentment and division that fomented the outbreak of combat. The document required its signatories to reaffirm "their unwavering determination to respect principles underlying the Rule of Law which include democracy, national unity, pluralism, [and] the respect of fundamental freedoms and rights of the individual."¹⁸ To anyone with the slightest knowledge of history regarding the Hutu and Tutsi, this agreement, though officially certified by both parties, amounted to a fool's errand. Regardless, its intent was to put an end to the Rwandan Civil War and eventually establish a democratic system with fair representation.

Signed on August 4, 1993 in Tanzania by representatives of both the RPF and the Hutu Government of the Republic of Rwanda, the most notable element it contained was an “Agreement on Power-Sharing,” which attempted to bring together the rivaling ethnic groups through political reconciliation.¹⁹

While other political parties emerged during the three years leading up to the proposed ceasefire, the “power” up to this point remained firmly in Hutu hands. Habyarimana opposed weakening his own executive authority in any form, but the leader explicitly rejected the recommendations for promoting Tutsis to positions of leadership within a Rwandan parliamentary system. However, as a result of the military advances made by the Tutsi RPA forces, and intense international pressure, Habyarimana reluctantly signed and agreed to the proposal of shared power.²⁰ He may have done so with his fingers crossed behind his back.

In an effort to monitor the proposed peace and implementation of Arusha’s power sharing agreement, the UN passed Security Resolution 872, which demanded the urgent deployment of an “international neutral force in Rwanda.”²¹ The UN Security Council established the “United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda,” or UNAMIR, to provide an international military presence and oversee the process for an initial period of six months, with a proviso for an extension should the council’s review find it necessary. The original UNAMIR mandate was to secure the capital city of Kigali; assist in humanitarian and relief operations; monitor the ceasefire; establish demilitarized zones and assist with the demobilization of armed forces within Rwanda; aid in the clearance of mines; and to prepare the warring parties as they each transitioned towards free elections.²² UNAMIR established an arms-free zone in Kigali on December 24, 1993, but those working in Rwanda towards a ceasefire had little faith in its successful implementation. The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Rwanda

was Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh of Cameroon, and many considered him to be far too friendly with Hutu government forces, who adamantly opposed the agreement.

As noted in the introduction, the UN intervenes in a region under the rules of neutrality. It is expressly forbidden to take sides while in the role of peacekeeper, and therefore, it is also not allowed to militarily confront an aggressor without proper authorization via a mandate. Self-defense, or working alongside a country's official policing operation, are the only possible exceptions. Unless the Security Council votes to enact Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the use of force to maintain peace equals action taken outside of the peacekeeping mandate. To reiterate, under Chapter VII, Article 43: All UN member nations "undertake to make available to the Security Council...armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security."²³ In other words, the evocation of Chapter VII would allow UN peacekeepers to flex their military muscle in their efforts to promote security. It is important to restate this legal exception, because it played an integral role in multinational discussions on intervention in Rwanda once the genocide began. Once brutal forces within one party set out to exterminate members or even mere associates of another, UNAMIR's position of neutrality came into question. UNAMIR could not uphold its peacekeeping mandate on this particular mission if it remained in its non-aligned, pacifistic state. The arbiter of the "civil war" quickly became the only obstacle to one group's systematic slaughter of another; due to UNAMIR's confining rules of engagement, the word "obstacle" in this instance is an overstatement.

To protect the fragile ceasefire outlined in the Arusha Accords, the UN chose Canadian Lieutenant General Romeo Dallaire to lead the UNAMIR force, which included Bangladeshis, Ghanaians, Tunisians, and about 225 soldiers from other nations.²⁴ Ironically, the most solid and

well-trained soldiers came from Belgium, which once held Rwanda as a colony. Compared to the others, who were unarmed, shabbily dressed, and lacked basic military skills, the Belgians represented the UNAMIR force well. However, their numbers were insignificant for the task at hand, even under the limited peacekeeping mandate. Once on the ground in Africa, Dallaire, whose knowledge of Rwanda was especially narrow before his assignment, realized he was in over his head.

When Dallaire landed in Rwanda in October of 1993, he immediately determined he was ill-equipped in terms of troops and supplies. The UNAMIR force he led was insufficiently staffed to confront the realities on the ground. Although the well-orchestrated genocide would not occur for months, Dallaire noticed many early signs of Arusha's impotence. Once debriefed by aid workers and Rwandans on the ground, he knew he needed more support. As mentioned, UNAMIR's mission involved overseeing the ceasefire, monitoring the political agreements of Arusha, and also, demilitarizing and demobilizing both the RPA and the FAR in order to prevent further bloodshed.²⁵ The UN soldiers had to keep the region stable for the ceasefire and political agreement to work. But reports of Hutu extremists, most notably the CRD and Interahamwe, stockpiling weapons, such as guns, grenades, and machetes, rushed in; as did evidence of their outright dismissal of the power-sharing arrangement with the despised Tutsi. The disclosure of these suspicious actions caused great concern among those on the ground who felt Booh-Booh was "blinded by his ties to the President's [Habyarimana] circle."²⁶

Prior to both the Arusha Accords and Dallaire's arrival, Human Rights Watch, led by its most accomplished champion in the region, Alison Des Forges, and in concert with representatives from eight countries, conducted the International Commission of Investigation to interview Rwandans regarding realities in state, and hopefully, reach a conclusion that would

prevent further violence.²⁷ Completed in March of 1993 at the urging of the executive director of the Rwanda Association for the Defense of Human Rights, Monique Mujawamariya, the commission found a multitude of atrocities committed by extremist Hutus. The subsequent Arusha Accords attempted to halt these human rights violations, but the ceasefire arrangement was viewed unfavorably among the Hutu militia groups and thus mostly ignored.

Even prior to the blatant nonobservance of Arusha, the international commission cautioned the UN of the likelihood of a potential genocide.²⁸ Its warnings included evidence of public, racist denunciations of Tutsis; mass Tutsi gravesites; nighttime grenade attacks; an increase in non-governmental militias; death lists containing the names of Tutsi politicians and moderate Hutu; and the build-up of weapons, particularly machetes, within the capital city of Kigali.²⁹ Armed with this information, and spurred to action by an unexpected discovery, Dallaire sent what is now regarded as the single most important document relating to the Rwandan massacre: the “Genocide Fax.”³⁰

On January 11, 1994, Dallaire immediately cabled his superiors at the UN Headquarters in New York after speaking with a credible informant who worked as an intermediary between the MRND and the Interahamwe. The double agent, now known as Jean-Pierre Abubakar Turatsinze,³¹ came from a half-Hutu, half-Tutsi family, as did so many other Rwandans. Turatsinze was able to work on both sides of the conflict, but found himself in a precarious position once he discovered the true intent of the Rwandan government’s more extreme allies, which he firmly believed was to kill all Tutsis. With a Tutsi mother and wife, three children, and twins on the way, Turatsinze sought political asylum and protection for himself and his family in exchange for information.³² What he relayed to Dallaire was chilling, and compelled the UN commander to take swift action and warn his bosses of an impending crisis of unimaginable

proportions. The memo, entitled “REQUEST FOR PROTECTION FOR INFORMANT,” vouched for Turatsinze’s credibility by listing his post as trainer of an Interahamwe militia, his former position as security detail for President Habyarimana, and his location within the Rwandan capital.³³ Dallaire had to ensure his warnings held weight.

Dallaire’s transmission detailed the Hutu extremists’ initial plans to assassinate all Tutsi and moderate Hutu political opponents. He also informed the UN of the Hutu intent to murder Belgian UNAMIR troops in order to guarantee their full withdrawal from Rwanda. Turatsinze had orders to register all Tutsi in Kigali for “extermination,” and asserted that his militia members could “murder 1000 Tutsis within twenty minutes.”³⁴ Dallaire noted the informant’s promise to lead UNAMIR forces to the Interahamwe’s weapons cache in Kigali, which included grenades and AK-47s. Aware of the magnitude of what he was hearing, the UNAMIR leader sought permission from the UN to raid the cache, and also safely evacuate Turatsinze and his family out of Rwanda.³⁵ Dallaire realized the Hutu were in the process of conducting “an outright slaughter and elimination of the opposition.”³⁶ He wanted to stop it.

In his effort to signal the UN with regards to Hutu plans, the Canadian received support from an unlikely source in Booh-Booh. Dallaire and Booh-Booh often clashed due to each man’s different interpretation of the developments in the region. Booh-Booh felt his personal relationship with Habyarimana and the FAR aided the UN in securing a peace and ensuring the government’s commitment to Arusha. Conversely, Rwandans, particularly Hutu, viewed Dallaire as far too sympathetic to the Tutsi, and Booh Booh agreed. However, once Dallaire discovered the information provided by Turatsinze, Booh-Booh “vouched for the informant” and supported his military counterpart.³⁷ Dallaire’s request for slightly extending UNAMIR’s mandate in order to raid the weapons cache, which he proposed to do within thirty-six hours,

reached the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Its head, Kofi Annan, who would become UN Secretary-General in 1997, refused Dallaire's request due precisely to the commander's move towards mission expansion. Annan even directed Booh-Booh and Dallaire to discuss the matter with the MRND, who as mentioned, held deep connections with the more extremist Hutu elements in the Interahamwe and other radical groups. Annan also denied protection to Turatisinze and his family.

Armed with Dallaire's dire warning, as well as numerous other similar notifications by UNAMIR and human rights organizations, Annan maintained his position until it was too late. The information provided by Dallaire was also transmitted to the American, French, Belgian, and Tanzanian ambassadors in Kigali, but to no effect.³⁸ Turatisinze's admission, along with several other reports of large Hutu rallies against the Tutsi and an increase in the knowledge of death lists and widespread killings, led to an outcry from humanitarian activists, diplomats, and UN workers on the ground.³⁹ But the UN's focus remained on securing a ceasefire and fostering healthier diplomatic relations; any calls to put a stop to the murderous rampages that signaled an even further, cataclysmic loss of life were ignored.

One of the most adumbrated aspects of the "Genocide Fax" is Turatisinze's belief that President Habyarimana "does not have full control over all elements of his old Party/ faction."⁴⁰ Although Habyarimana did not entirely act in accordance with the Arusha Accords, and downplayed the document's significance in private, he publicly agreed to them. He signed them. To the dismay of many Hutu within Habyarimana's Presidential Guard and other radical factions, the Arusha Accords served as the catalyst for UN intervention through UNAMIR. As a result, many anti-Tutsi zealots within his own party, the MRND, and primarily the Interahamwe, lost faith in his leadership. Adding to this tension was a simultaneous civil conflict between

Hutu and Tutsis afflicting Rwanda's southern neighbor, Burundi. In November of 1993, Burundian Tutsis assassinated the democratically-elected Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye, which caused a violent outbreak of anti-Tutsi attacks and a dramatic increase of Tutsi refugees fleeing into Rwanda.⁴¹ Dallaire noted this development as an additional cause for concern, as Hutu avengers in both states became even more emboldened.

Before Dallaire's arrival in Rwanda, the UNAMIR commander estimated his need for a force of at least 5,000 to effectively perform his duties. With Americans already weary of UN peacekeeping due to the escalating situation in Somalia even prior to the Battle of Mogadishu, the Clinton Administration rejected this appeal from its position of power within the UN Security Council. According to one US official, "Anytime you mentioned peacekeeping in Africa...the crucifix and garlic would come up on every door."⁴² Reluctantly, the US agreed to half of Dallaire's proposed troop numbers. Dallaire had to settle for a UNAMIR force of 2,500 soldiers to uphold the Arusha Accords' hollow directives and protect a non-existent ceasefire.

For the first few months of 1994, warnings of genocide flooded the world's foremost international body. But Rwanda remained low on the list of priorities at the UN, which at the time, posted 70,000 peacekeepers on seventeen missions worldwide.⁴³ Dallaire constantly fought with his superiors over inadequate equipment and a severe shortage of food and medicine. Annan's DPKO, along with its rejection of UNAMIR's arms raids, consistently pointed to the October 3 tragedy in Somalia to shut down any recourse regarding mandate expansion. Dallaire found himself powerless as he witnessed increases in political assassinations and blatant weapons procurement. To add to this inadequacy, his full force of 2,500 did not arrive in total until April 1994, only days before the genocide began. UNAMIR's mandate for the security of Kigali and the prevention of a widespread violence proved overwhelmingly deficient from its

start. Unfortunately, the multinational coalitions with the most influence, such as the UN and OAU, did not adequately respect the devolving situation.

An incident that occurred in early April inspired the OAU and other African Heads of State, who later reviewed the genocide, to assert in 2000: “The rockets that brought down President Habyarimana’s plane on April 6, 1994, became the catalyst for one of the great calamities of our age.”⁴⁴ While returning from a meeting in Tanzania regarding the declining status of Burundi and a possible strengthening of the Arusha Accords, the plane carrying Presidents Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprien Ntaryimira of Burundi, both Hutu, was shot down in Rwandan air space. Within an hour of this event, a combination of FAR and Interahamwe forces initiated the fastest and most organized slaughter of the twentieth century.⁴⁵ In the span of a few days, any individual seen as holding power or influence against the Hutu aggressors within Kigali, along with their families, lost their lives in a blur of brutality. The Hutu forces set up roadblocks to prevent any attempts to escape, and handed out lists peppered with names of those to be eliminated. The perpetrators also utilized an extremist radio station, Radio Mille Collines, to out Hutu opponents, incite ethnic hatred, and inspire Hutu supporters to join them and “weed out the cockroaches.”⁴⁶ What began in Kigali quickly spread throughout the country. The plane crash signaled the official start to the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.

Prudence Bushnell, who worked as the Deputy Assistant at the State Department’s Bureau for African Affairs, remembers her reaction to the news of the plane crash with vivid detail. Immediately upon being notified, she exclaimed, “Oh shit...Are you sure?”⁴⁷ As one of the few Americans with any real appreciation for what faced the Rwandan people as a result of this event, Bushnell sent an urgent memo to Secretary of State Warren Christopher’s office. In what is now cited as “The Bushnell Memo,” she alerted America’s top diplomat to the probable

deaths of Habyarimana and Ntaryamira and the consequences that lie ahead. Bushnell warned top State Department officials of the Rwandan military's disarmament of the mostly Belgian UNAMIR troops, who hurriedly rushed to the scene. After taking away their arms, the FAR forces prevented the UNAMIR soldiers from inspecting the crash site.⁴⁸ As an aside, the crash was almost certainly caused by elements within Habyarimana's own presidential guard who shot it down. It remains officially unsolved, though most observers, including the CIA, agree it was an inside job.

Bushnell understood Habyarimana's open seat of power would not only cause a succession crisis due to the absence of any political assembly (a National Assembly had yet to form under the Arusha Accords), but also, widespread atrocities. She visited the region as late as March 1994, and registered "deep concern over the mounting violence in Rwanda," as well as the "distribution of arms and arms caches."⁴⁹ In her memo, she mentioned that FAR forces informed Booh-Booh of their intention to temporarily take over. Booh-Booh challenged this plan, and encouraged them to follow the "framework of the Arusha Accords."⁵⁰ But due to FAR's resistance to working with the moderate interim Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyamana, this request was made in vain. All of this information reached the highest levels of the State Department the night of the plane crash, and mere hours before the well-planned genocide became a reality.

In a 2003 interview for PBS's *Frontline*, Bushnell recalls learning of barricades being erected around the airport in Kigali on the evening of the crash. Due to her familiarity with Rwanda and the Presidential Guard, she knew instantaneously that "civilians...were being rounded up and killed."⁵¹ On previous visits to Rwanda, RPF members warned her of Hutu plans. They adamantly cautioned against ignoring the CDR and its intent to kill Tutsis. Bushnell

admits that due to the State Department's focus on political reconciliation and its reliance on Arusha, she did not lend her full ear. But as soon as the news hit her on April 6, the RPF's emphatically-stated concerns rushed back. They were right. She describes receiving information within hours of the crash, and affirms the fact that "it [reports of murders] didn't let up."⁵² From the genocide's starting point, Bushnell understood the bloodshed was not confined to political upheaval, and she communicated this fact to her superiors. She knew that for the Hutu, it was not mere politics. It was mass slaughter. She states, "It just kept getting worse and worse and worse."⁵³ But she had to do her job. Bushnell's primary responsibility was to account for US personnel on the ground, and safely evacuate them. She would later learn the horrors witnessed by her American colleagues, who each made it home unharmed, but forever scarred.

Some of the more telling accounts of the ruthlessness of the genocide are included in Power's detailed analysis. In "*A Problem From Hell*," Power describes the helplessness felt by American diplomats, and in particular, Joyce Leader, who was second in command under the US Ambassador to Rwanda, David Rawson. Leader lived in a home owned by the US Embassy, and located next door to the moderate Prime Minister Uwilingiyimana. Upon learning of Habyarimana's fate on the night of April 6, Dallaire immediately informed an eerily calm group of Hutu FAR forces of the proposed line of succession under Arusha, which would make Uwilingiyimana the lawful head of state. The men were indignant about their army assuming control, despite Dallaire's admonitions. Hours later, on the morning of April 7th, Uwilingiyimana called Leader in a panic, begging the American to hide her and her family. Leader describes her own mindset as one of complete shock. Leader recounts, "She [Uwilingiyimana] was prime minister...I was just a lowly diplomat."⁵⁴ UNAMIR troops assigned to protect Uwilingiyimana made several attempts to thrust her over a wall into Leader's

compound, but sporadic gunfire stalled this effort. She eventually made it into another compound with her husband and children. Shortly after, more shots were fired. Leader heard the screams of Uwilingiyimana and her family. She then heard silence.⁵⁵

In order to achieve free reign to carry out their well-organized mission, Hutu soldiers knew they had to drive the UN peacekeepers from the region. One of the ways they succeeded in this endeavor was to murder ten Belgian UNAMIR soldiers who were guarding Uwilingiyimana. After the Belgians laid down their arms, the Hutu killed each of them, then mutilated their bodies.⁵⁶ This action incensed the Belgian government and confirmed US attitudes on Rwanda as the equivalent to Somalia. It echoed the soured, post-Mogadishu perspective American officials held regarding peacekeeping. Almost immediately, Belgium sent additional troops, but only to safely remove any Belgian soldiers who remained in Kigali. The strongest UNAMIR troops were gone. Within one week, most other nations followed suit, and the UN revisited the question of continued intervention. The murders of Uwilingiyimana and her family, the Belgian peacekeepers, and almost every other moderate politician in Rwanda signaled to Dallaire that his mission died along with them.⁵⁷

Over the next few days, Dallaire witnessed horrors that confirmed the deaths were not just politically-motivated killings; it was the coordinated, intentional genocide he feared. No Tutsi was off limits. The same was true for any moderate Hutu. Escape was not an option for most. Ironically, the identification card system put in place during Belgium rule remained, and served as a bullseye for Tutsi who attempted to pass through a Hutu-guarded roadblock if he or she chose to flee.⁵⁸ Additionally, since intermarriage was common among Rwandans, those Hutu with half-Tutsi, half-Hutu children either chose death, or witnessed the slaughter of their spouses, sons and daughters before their eyes.

Those UNAMIR troops who remained did what they could to halt the killings, which were mostly carried out with machetes. But their deficiency in numbers, lack of equipment, and most importantly, the neutrality mandate, tied their hands. They witnessed hundreds of children chopped to pieces outside of a local church. Bodies piled up in the streets, and choked the Kagera River, which the Hutu used as a dumping site. Most Tutsis evacuated their homes and fled to places they believed would offer them refuge, such as churches, hospitals, or schools. Those who did so often put themselves in greater danger, as the Hutu targeted these areas. Large, centralized gatherings of Tutsi made their job easier. Some of these locations existed under the watchful eye of Red Cross volunteers, human rights workers, or what was left of UNAMIR. Though not always a deterrent, the presence of outsiders did protect some potential victims. For this reason, a significant number of Tutsi in Kigali were alive at the end of April, which was more than enough time to mobilize international military intervention to put a stop to the genocide and save those who remained targets. Even so, as reported by Human Rights Watch, survivor testimonies indicate that in only fourteen days, 250,000 Tutsi were killed.⁵⁹ In many cases, the Hutu, especially the young, bloodthirsty Interahamwe, would stand outside of these supposed safe zones, and wait. Some of the aid workers, and peacekeepers in particular, often had multiple locations to monitor. As soon as these foreign observers left a certain “safe” site to offer their services to another, the Hutu would move in and implement their savage agenda. When the workers would return, they were greeted by the mangled corpses of the people they were desperately trying to protect.

For most of these peacekeepers and humanitarians, the men, women, and children mercilessly slaughtered by the Hutu were their friends and co-workers. Bushnell painfully describes the impossible decision facing Ambassador Rawson and the State Department

employees who were ordered to evacuate by the Secretaries of State and Defense, under the direction of President Clinton, just one day into the genocide. Bushnell knew her main objective was to get her people out of harm's way, but it also meant abandoning those Rwandans who worked beside them in the interests of peace. Rawson himself had to leave behind almost 300 Rwandans who gathered at his home seeking refuge.⁶⁰ The diplomats did not even have the capacity to save members of their own staff. Power tells of Rawson's chief steward, who begged the US ambassador to come to his home and save him during the first wave of killings. Rawson was trapped in his own residence, and could not aid his friend in any way. Rawson's steward and his wife were among those murdered.⁶¹

It took about one week to successfully evacuate all Americans, including the ambassador. The embassy closed, and the American flag was lowered. Bushnell notes of concern for their "Rwanda team,"⁶² and the certainty among the evacuated Americans of the fate awaiting their African colleagues in their absence. She and others in the Bureau for African Affairs knew the Rwandans had gathered in places they sincerely believed would be protected. But the cavalry was not on its way. They, unfortunately, knew what was about to occur. Bushnell notes:

I mean, it really would be abandoning people. It's one thing to say, 'OK, well, we'll hope for the best.' It's another thing to know that thousands are gathered in one locale and to say, 'Bye, you know, good luck,' and leave them to the slaughter. [That] was repulsive.⁶³

Following the successful evacuation of all Americans in Kigali, the genocide quickly fanned out. Due to the concentration of large numbers of Rwandans in the capital city, most of the killings took place during the month of April. But these numbers were not known to the international community at the time. For all it new, a chance remained for organizations such as the UN to increase support and save lives. The exact number of those who could be protected may have been small in relation to those killed in Kigali, but it was still significant. In April, the US and

its fellow UN member nations had ample opportunity to confront the brutality taking place. From the few resources left on the ground in Rwanda, Dallaire included, UN and US officials received regular updates on the expansion of the murders, both in size and scope.⁶⁴ The decision against active and forceful intervention was made within the first week after Habyarimana's death. For the US, it was essentially made on October 3, 1993 in the streets of Mogadishu. Rwanda was condemned to its fate. The actual number of those killed is estimated at 800,000, but the true total will never be known.⁶⁵

In his 1998 speech in Rwanda, Clinton claimed he was not fully aware of the genocide consuming the African nation at the time it reached its highest levels. He ultimately blamed the American decision against intervention on ignorance. Clinton attempted to justify his inaction by asserting:

It may seem strange to you here, especially the many of you who lost members of your family, but all over the world there were people like me sitting in offices, day after day after day, who did not fully appreciate the depth and the speed with which you were being engulfed by this unimaginable terror."⁶⁶

The release of classified documents obtained by the National Security Archive at The George Washington University as a result of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request challenge Clinton's move to evade responsibility. William Ferrogiaro, the Director of the Freedom of Information Project, compiled these materials into a report, which includes a multitude of evidence to counter Clinton's pretense of unawareness. Although the report lacks many materials which remain classified, particularly those of the CIA, it contains substantial documentation to uphold its summarized view that Clinton's decision against intervention was not based on a lack of knowledge as to what was happening in Rwanda. It was a risk-adverse choice, formed largely due to the political environment, where UN peacekeeping was losing its credibility.

The Bushnell Memo is part of this report. The collection largely consists of memorandums circulated within the State Department, the UN, intelligence agencies, and the Department of Defense. One significant finding comes from the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), which acts as the State Department's intelligence arm. It produces the Secretary's Morning Summary (SMS), which is the equivalent of the CIA's Presidential Daily Briefing (PDB), but for the Secretary of State. The most notable SMS briefings are from April 12 and April 26. On April 12, INR analysts warned against pulling the UNAMIR mission, stating it "could lead to a bloodbath involving the civilians UNAMIR is protecting."⁶⁷ On April 26, the SMS included that the INR "foresaw in Rwanda 'genocide and partition,'" and noted "at least 100,000 Rwandans have been killed."⁶⁸ It also cautioned "the toll could be 500,000," with an added, ominous comment: "the butchery shows no sign of ending."⁶⁹ The use of the word "genocide" here is notable.

Similar to the SMS, the CIA provides a highly-classified intelligence report to hundreds of policymakers within the US government. This *National Intelligence Daily (NID)* is presented in newspaper format, and distributed six days per week.⁷⁰ Since the *NID* often includes much of the information contained in the PDB, Ferroggiaro states that the release of some *NID* documents provides evidence similar to that which would be found in the classified PDBs. If anything, the PDBs contain greater detail about certain events and threats, so the *NIDs* released by the CIA prove the president received daily updates on Rwanda. Of note in this analysis are two *NIDs* from April warning of the escalating situation. On April 7, the morning after the plane crash, CIA analysts predicted the resumption of civil war and the probability of Rwandan military attempts to assume power. By April 23, the *NID* included a question of what the RPF could do

“in an effort to stop the genocide, which relief workers say is spreading south.”⁷¹ Again, the use of the word “genocide” is important.

Documents within Ferroggiaro’s report also show the administration and officials throughout various levels of the US government knew the plane was shot down by the Rwandan Presidential Guard, and understood the implications of the power vacuum. For months leading up to the crash, and after, the National Security Agency (NSA) intercepted extremist communications via what it deemed “hate radio.”⁷² The NSA provided real-time information to policymakers, and warned of the calls for genocide coming from Rwandan broadcast radio sources, such as Radio Mille Collines.

The UN also received an influx of reports noting the killing of civilians and affirmations of early categorizations of genocide. In a briefing memo to the Security Council on April 20, a Nigerian representative shamed the international body regarding the preferential status given to the situation in Bosnia. Although reprehensible, the ethnic cleansing taking place in the former Yugoslavia was only about one third the size of what would occur in Rwanda, and the genocide in Rwanda took place prior to the Summer 1995 Srebrenica and Markale Market Massacres. The representative declared, “Nigeria cannot understand how the West could contemplate reinforcing UNPROFOR [UN peacekeeping force in Bosnia] and withdrawing UNAMIR at the same time.”⁷³ On April 10, Dallaire requested troop reinforcements. He wanted to double the UNAMIR force to match his initial estimate of the 5,000 needed for the mission. He desperately needed vehicles and fuel, ammunition, and communications equipment as well. Dallaire did not even have sufficient rations of food or clean water.⁷⁴ While he dictated his demands to UN officials, it was the US who ultimately controlled their response. The UN Security Council voted on April 21, 1994 to cut the UNAMIR forces that remained, leaving a token staff of under

300.⁷⁵ Although the UN troop drawdown officially left a force of 270, 503 stayed under

Dallaire's command. Dallaire later wrote of this defeat:

My force was standing knee-deep in mutilated bodies, surrounded by guttural moans of dying people, looking into the eyes of children bleeding to death with their wounds burning in the sun and being invaded by maggots and flies...I found myself walking through villages where the only sign of life was a goat, or a chicken, or a songbird, as all the people were dead, their bodies being eaten by voracious packs of wild dogs.⁷⁶

Ironically, it was Madeleine Albright, the Jewish child of Czechoslovakian parents and a refugee herself during WWII, who carried Clinton's water at the UN and resisted all attempts to gain US support. As the American representative at the UN, Albright blocked most efforts to rebuild the UNAMIR force, or even to adequately equip it once an affirmative decision was made to intervene. Albright presents her role as one of following orders. However, she also notes how in her duties as US Ambassador to the UN, she "became increasingly convinced we were on the wrong side of the issue."⁷⁷ Albright recalls how during the early days of the genocide, she had already cooled to the idea of UN peacekeeping in Africa. Somalia's legacy tainted all American decisions on Rwanda. She did not see any practical way for the UN to restore order, and describes the weeks wasted on a new plan as the product of infighting among UN member nations and the OAU, who was asked to send troops.⁷⁸

Albright was not considered someone who held her tongue. During council discussions, a report by Doctors Without Borders, a non-profit medical relief group working in Rwanda, revealed that Hutu extremists killed an entire hospital staff and returned the following day to kill any remaining patients.⁷⁹ In an astonishing and unlucky coincidence that generated bad optics, the genocide occurred during the Rwandan UN Ambassador's two-year term as a rotating member of the Security Council. Albright asked the Rwandan government representative to explain the report. After a long period of silence, the Hutu gave the standard, government-

sanctioned answer that it was the Tutsis who were unwilling to participate in peace talks and implement the Arusha Accords. Albright records her level of disgust that the Rwandan kept his seat on the council despite the government-sanctioned violence he represented.⁸⁰ But it was not enough for her to try to convince Clinton or anyone else in the administration to take corrective action. Like most other members of the administration during the genocide, Albright only expresses regret.

In response to the UNAMIR drawdown of troops, Africa specialists from state begged, “the [remaining UNAMIR] force is protecting 12,000 refugees in Kigali. We should not advocate...abandoning these people.”⁸¹ An April 21 letter from Rwandan human rights activist Monique Mujawamariya sent directly to Clinton echoed these cries. Mujawamariya, who was initially thought to have died in the early days of the genocide, demanded the president act against what she called “a campaign [of]...genocide against the Tutsis.”⁸² As a prior guest of Clinton’s at the White House only months earlier, she felt she could get through to him. According to Des Forges, Clinton was aware of Mujawamariya’s perilous position, and relieved when he found out she survived. But he did not heed her call to abide by the “moral and legal treaty obligation to ‘suppress and prevent’ genocide.”⁸³ The “legal” part of Mujawamariya’s letter undoubtedly refers to the 1948 Genocide Convention.

In his examination into “naming the crime” during the 1994 genocide, Eric Heinze, who specializes in political science and international studies, argues “conventional wisdom now holds that Clinton Administration officials avoided using the ‘g word’ for fear that using it would have obliged them to take action under the terms of the 1948 Genocide Convention.”⁸⁴ US officials did not use the word genocide until May 21, 1994. Even then, they made sure to define what was taking place in Rwanda as “acts of genocide,” rather than genocide itself.⁸⁵ Power

authoritatively documents the hesitancy by American officials to accurately describe events on the ground in Rwanda as deliberate. Disagreement within the UN about the use of the word plagued the organization, and the US delegation led the fight against it. When Boutros Boutros-Ghali drew up a statement referring to the situation in Rwanda as “genocide,” the Americans shot it down.⁸⁶ At issue was not only the administration’s fear of public reaction should the US intervene in Rwanda, but also fear of public reaction for *failing* to intervene in what was the clearest case of genocide since the Holocaust [emphasis added].⁸⁷ Although becoming a party to the Genocide Convention, which the US finally did in 1988, does not require a nation to commit military forces in the case of genocide, defining an event as genocide would dramatically increase both foreign and domestic pressure to stop it. In Heinze’s words, “Since naming the crime would have pressured the United States to do just this, the crime was not named.”⁸⁸

The US also argued against changing the UNAMIR mandate to a Chapter VII, which would allow it to use force against the Hutu aggressors.⁸⁹ The US denied requests to jam radio signals so as to halt extremist, racist calls for genocide. The US rejected calls for greater resources and a new, “beefed up force (UNAMIR II).”⁹⁰ After weeks of stalling, the Americans, led by Albright, finally agreed to a version of Dallaire’s request using mostly African troops, but few of the continent’s nations supplied them. Then came more US equivocation. Towards the end of May, with the majority of the genocide carried out, further arguments over equipment, which was to be procured by the Americans, as well as who was to pay for the logistical support of the revised mission, dragged on. This shuffling resulted in tens of thousands more dead. The French launched an operation on June 23, and it saved some lives. But it would not be until the RPA, under the command of RPF leader Paul Kagame, took back Kigali in mid-July that the

genocide would finally end. Not one additional UN troop arrived in Rwanda between the beginning of the genocide and the finality of it.

Given this information, the question to ask is whether or not the Clinton Administration should have undertaken the task and deployed forces to Rwanda, or even used its position on the UN Security Council to propel the international body into resolute action. As noted by William Hyland, Clinton's stated proposals for post-Cold War US involvement on the international stage introduced a heavy focus on humanitarian missions and the advancement of human rights. Most of Clinton's national security advisors viewed the adherence to moral principles as a means to bolster American interests both overseas at home.⁹¹ Though commendable in its goals, the Clinton team's foreign policy rhetoric could not keep up with global instability. An ongoing dilemma which continues to confront and divide Americans is found within this historical chasm between intent and implementation. Do the costs of acting as the world's policing power outweigh the benefits derived from fighting oppression and protecting vulnerable societies wherever the need arises? After just one test in Somalia, the once idealistic Clinton Administration answered in the affirmative. It could not afford Rwanda.

It is no question that the US military had the capability to intervene and stop the genocide either before its start or within the first few days of its progression. However, as pointed out by Bushnell, the Pentagon fought against her requests for support, largely due to the Clinton Administration's preference for intervention elsewhere. The removal of a democratically-elected president by a military junta in Haiti, which created a massive refugee problem in the US, won Clinton's attention, which he did not share even amid the escalating murder rate in Rwanda. Acting under this authority, the Pentagon repeatedly informed Bushnell of its inability to commit resources to an area not deemed by the president to be one of "strategic interest."⁹² The

introduction of any US military presence in Rwanda for the purposes of stopping the genocide would divert too many assets away from Clinton's chosen mission in Haiti. According to Democratic Congressman Alcee Hastings of Florida, the Haitian focus took over based on "megashocks of refugee influx."⁹³ He suggested that his own complacency towards Rwanda, which was shared by most in Congress, rested on the idea that "Africa seems so far away, and there is no vital interest that my constituency sees."⁹⁴ Absent congressional or public support, and amid the simultaneous challenge presented by Haiti, Clinton chose not to act. To provide even further context, the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia overshadowed reports coming in from Central Africa. Thus, the ideas founded in the administration's proposals for democratic enlargement and aggressive multilateralism, which largely rested on a broad latitude given to the president in his choices of when and where to respond to foreign conflict, proved damning for Rwanda.

In his comprehensive analysis of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, Alan Kuperman of the Lyndon B. Johnson School for Public Affairs at the University of Texas argues against critics of the Clinton Administration, who maintain the president could have acted in Rwanda to stop the killing, but chose not to. However, Kuperman contradicts his own case by stating it is both realistic and in the nation's interest that "an exception...be made for cases of genocide, especially where intervention can succeed at low cost."⁹⁵ Although Kuperman effectively outlines the options presented to Clinton, as well as the progression of alternatives to the president's adherence to noninterference, his defense of US policy in Rwanda hinders on impersonal statistics. Kuperman concedes that if Clinton made a firm decision in favor of intervention in Rwanda:

Advance units...could have begun operations much sooner. Approximately four days after the [presidential] order, a battalion or two of Army Rangers could have

parachuted in and seized [the] Kigali airport...[and] Follow-on troops could have expanded outward from the airfield to establish a secure operating base. Within about two weeks, sufficient troops and equipment could have arrived to halt the fighting, form a buffer between FAR and the RPF in Kigali and northwest in Rwanda, and fully police the capital.⁹⁶

Also notable is the fact that within forty-eight hours, almost 3,000 troops from multiple countries landed in Rwanda. The US had also stationed 200 US Marines close to the Rwandan border with Burundi. But the purpose of each of these forces was to safely evacuate their own foreign nationals.

Many experts on the Rwandan Genocide contend the mere presence of Western forces with a changed mandate would have served as enough of a deterrent to stall the actions of the Hutu extremists in the capital. Kuperman challenges this point by assuming this strategy may have actually encouraged the killers to expedite their mission. But what is most disconcerting about his article resides in its insistence that due to the genocide's rapid progression, "such an intervention would have saved about 275,000 Tutsi, instead of the 150,000 who actually survived."⁹⁷ So, according to Kuperman, the 125,000 who may have stood a chance did not warrant the risk involved with deploying well-armed American soldiers, or UN reinforcements, against mostly machete-wielding militia members.

This analysis of Kuperman's well-researched work does not intend to criticize its findings as unfeeling. Foreign policy decisions, particularly those which must account for sending US troops into harm's way, are often made with a healthy dose of dispassion due to the enormity of losing just one American life. But even without direct US military intervention, American diplomatic and economic power would have made a solid impact. Instead, US entrenchment and stalling efforts in the UN allowed the gruesome process to march on unimpeded. The genocide ended within the first two weeks of July, but only when RPA troops made significant gains

throughout the countryside and finally reclaimed Kigali.⁹⁸ Only then did the Clinton Administration outstretch its hand.

As described by Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Robert Patterson, instead of using American military prowess to stop the mass murder of women and children, Clinton agreed to deploy troops to deliver more UN peacekeepers, medical personnel, and supplies to support refugees under a new UN mandate, issued after the majority of the killings occurred.⁹⁹ Patterson, a lifelong soldier, decries how in the wake of Somalia, the administration made it very clear that the American involvement in Rwanda was “humanitarian support” and not “peacekeeping.”¹⁰⁰ He documents the dispatch of 2300 US troops, but also notes their removal within two months. Patterson criticizes this use of American military might as providing nothing in terms of significant achievement: “Nothing to stop the genocide, nothing really to justify our involvement at all...we never had the resolve.”¹⁰¹ David Scheffer, who served as Ambassador Albright’s senior advisor and counsel during Clinton’s first term, further documents his disappointment in the American response to Rwanda. He notes that a dedication to humanitarian intervention, particularly when it reaches the level of ethnic cleansing or genocide, requires that “policy-makers have the political will to act on the imperative of human survival.”¹⁰²

In 1998, the Organization for African Unity (OAU) commissioned a panel comprised of multiple African heads of state to uncover the reasons for the genocide and the role other nations and international organizations played in its progression. Known as the International Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and the Surrounding Events, the group’s goal was to “establish the facts about how such a grievous crime was conceived, planned, and executed; to look at the failure to enforce the Genocide Convention in Rwanda...; and to recommend measures at redressing the consequences of the genocide and at preventing

any possible recurrence of such a crime.”¹⁰³ The OAU delivered its report in July of 2000.

While its findings on the causes of the horrific brutality are presented with a strong anti-Western tone, its documentation of the UN’s deficient response, and the apathy of other nations with the power to stop the killings, finds credibility in reports of what outside forces knew and when they knew it.

Even though the report lays heavy emphasis on European, and in the case of Rwanda, Belgium colonialism, and its stoking of already tense internal divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi, the panel agreed: “It is of course true that there would have been no genocide had a small group among Rwandan governing elite not deliberately incited the country’s Hutu majority against the Tutsi minority.”¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the damning critique of the UN and outside nations lies more in the years prior to the genocide. Before, during, and after the killings, moves could have been made. But, according to the OAU, “this terrible conspiracy only succeeded because certain actors external to Rwanda allowed it to go ahead.”¹⁰⁵ The OAU findings reveal a strong bias against Western powers and the authority they hold at the UN. But African nations themselves did little to address the problem in Rwanda. This fact, however, does not diminish the responsibility held by the US, and especially the president, when a crisis of this magnitude is allowed to proceed unimpeded. American leadership is required to bring along the rest of the world, whether it is in Europe, the Middle East, or Africa.

Holly Burkhalter from the International Justice System (IJS), who once served as the Washington Director of Human Rights Watch, blames a “lack of leadership”¹⁰⁶ within the Clinton Administration for its slow response. In her examination of the Rwandan Genocide and the president’s response to it, Burkhalter makes the oft-repeated and validated suggestion of Somalia’s influence on the refusal to commit any real American effort towards stopping or even

slowing the rampage. She emphatically states that the “loss of American servicemen in Somalia” led directly to a “distrust of peacekeeping in Africa;”¹⁰⁷ not only in The White House, but particularly in the Pentagon. As emphasized throughout this work, military officials operating under the Clinton Administration suffered from an unwillingness to commit troops to missions containing murky, if not completely absent, objectives. Insufficient logistical support often accompanied any suggestions by civilian leaders as to the possible use of US forces. Bosnia serves as a concrete case, as does Somalia. But Rwanda solidifies the pattern. Even with all of the rhetoric aimed at an “internationalist vision,” combining the “use of force” with a “reliance on multinational institutions,”¹⁰⁸ Clinton’s growing distaste for the pressures of committing American lives to endeavors determined by a stretched and inefficient UN served as a powerful deterrent. In the minds of the once-idealistic Clinton team, humanitarian intervention and multilateral peacekeeping each lost its status as a moral imperative.

Albright also points to Somalia as the major obstacle to any effective action taken by the US. She regrets the manner by which American leaders, herself included, viewed Somalia and Rwanda as too similar in nature for another expanded peacekeeping venture. But she cautions, “Somalia was something close to anarchy. Rwanda was planned mass murder. Somalia counseled caution; Rwanda demanded action.”¹⁰⁹ Sadly, the Clinton Administration did not have the patience, nor the foresight, to lead the international community. Albright asserts that a US-led coalition of multinational troops under firm orders to stop killings, arrest leaders, and establish security could have been deployed quickly. She regrets not advocating for this solution at a time when she held such an influential position with regards to international authority.

Likewise, Bushnell points to the UN peacekeeping failure in Somalia as the primary culprit for US inaction. She notes that after the Battle of Mogadishu, and the removal of US

forces, “we didn’t want to put money in something that was not going to be a success, both politically for President Clinton, and for the United States and the U.N. as a whole.”¹¹⁰ Clinton somewhat concedes this point in his autobiography. In his own telling of the event, which is somewhat self-serving, Clinton expresses pride in how quickly his State Department was able to evacuate all Americans on the ground in Rwanda unharmed. But he also admits:

We were so preoccupied with Bosnia, with the memory of Somalia just six months old, and with opposition in Congress to military deployments in faraway places not vital to our national interests that neither I nor anyone on my foreign policy team adequately focused on sending troops to stop the slaughter. The failure to try to stop Rwanda’s tragedies became one of the greatest regrets of my presidency.¹¹¹

Possibly out of an attempt to gain forgiveness, Clinton mentions the Africa Crisis Response Initiative put forth by his administration to better prepare Africans to stop wars and prevent other Rwandas. He also points to his post-presidency creation of the Clinton Foundation, and its work to reduce the AIDS epidemic in Africa, and Rwanda in particular. These moves, although noble in effort, do little to assuage a collective American guilt over the nation’s failure to lead, or even act, during the most significant case of systematic, deliberate mass murder since the Second World War.

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Chapter 6. WHY HAITI?

“Here we go again,” remarked one of Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Robert Patterson’s captains at the Travis Air Force Base operations room in California.¹ While Patterson’s squadron watched CNN’s coverage of their next mission, a staff sergeant echoed, “I can’t believe the president is putting us into Haiti...and for what?”² Within days, Patterson and his team would fly to the small Caribbean island with reinforcements, equipment, and vehicles to support a disproportionately large invasion force. For many members of the military, the rapid increase in peacekeeping deployments since 1992, along with a decrease in troop strength and above all, mission clarity, grew tiresome. On September 15, 1994, President Clinton announced his intent to utilize American military forces to oust a violent military junta that deposed the democratically-elected president of Haiti in a 1991 coup d’état. With a posture of securing national interests, and again working under the auspices of the UN, Clinton emphasized the country’s responsibility to act “when brutality occurs close to our shores.”³ But for many outside of the administration, including those tasked with carrying out the assignment, the timing of the event seemed suspicious. With the violence in the Balkans still raging, and in the aftermath of UN peacekeeping failures in Somalia and Rwanda, it appeared to them as though Clinton was in dire need of a foreign policy success. With mid-term congressional elections looming, the president publicly issued the orders as the last of the US soldiers stationed in Africa reached American soil.

On September 19, 1994, the Multinational Force for Haiti (MFH), led by the American military and consisting of 20,000 US troops, headed towards Haiti as part of a multilateral mission to restore deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power.⁴ Under the code name Operation Uphold Democracy, Clinton ordered US forces to lead the UN coalition in an attempt

to solidify the democratic process in Haiti. The problems with this objective were plenty. First, and foremost, democracy in Haiti remained elusive despite the 1991 elections, as did the peaceful internal means to protect it should Aristide regain his position of leadership. Second, the UN-approved mission essentially called for some form of nation-building in order to secure democratically-elected leaders in Haiti, which the US was not prepared to undertake. The US again found itself heavily involved in yet another UN peacekeeping mission with vague, idealistic objectives. But this time, the UN immediately triggered its Chapter VII mandate sanctioning the use of force, with the US military designated to coordinate and lead the military action. Just days after many of the soldiers who served in Somalia and Rwanda arrived home, they were again venturing off to an unstable, violent region under the premise of securing political reconciliation between two warring factions. Historically speaking, their presence would do little to solve the problems facing the Haitians, whose past woes with regards to democratic representation, political corruption, and brutal rebellion were numerous. The president's promise to keep the action "limited and specific," with an emphatic caveat that American soldiers "will not be involved in rebuilding Haiti or its economy,"⁵ left many cynics questioning the true motives behind the overwhelming force headed towards Haitian shores.

This intervention in Haiti would not be the first for the US. Since it became the world's first "black" republic after winning its independence in 1804, democracy had unfortunately evaded Haiti. Prior to 1991, the country existed under a succession of exploitative, murderous dictators, who condemned the nation to poverty, famine, persistent violence, and overall societal disorder for almost two centuries.⁶ When Haiti won its independence from the French, it was saddled with a "badly damaged plantation system, a powerful political class composed of former soldiers and a mixed race bourgeoisie, and a largely illiterate peasant society of five hundred

thousand former slaves.”⁷ These innate problems persisted over the course of almost two-hundred years, mainly due to a constant flux of political instability and economic strife.

Despite these failures of leadership, Haiti often served as a psychological threat to Americans, due to their own shameful history with regards to race. During the antebellum years in the US, slaveholding states feared the impact the successful Haitian Revolution could have on American slaves. The success of freed black Toussaint L’ouverture, the initial leader of the rebellion for Haitian independence, relied heavily upon a foundation comprised of the American revolutionary ideals of individual liberty, self-governance, and the inherent equality of all men. However, L’ouverture and his followers also drew from the more radical concepts born out of the French Revolution, which left many Americans worried that reports on the victorious uprising may reach those who they themselves still held in chains. Even after the Civil War, with American slaves technically liberated, widespread discrimination and inhumane treatment, along with racist societal and state-sponsored codes of behavior, severely hindered the advancements of newly freed blacks in the US.

At the turn of the twentieth century, when Progressivism began to take hold, a more paternalistic and scientifically-motivated view of relations between whites and blacks emerged. Social Darwinism, scientific racism, biological determinism, and Rudyard Kipling’s *The White Man’s Burden* all contributed to cultural attitudes regarding “liberal interventionism”⁸ in foreign policy in the early 1900s. These condescending concepts are widely apparent when analyzing the first American occupation of Haiti under Progressive President Woodrow Wilson.

Despite American westward expansion under the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, which defined “Anglo-Saxons as superior...[and] gave members of the dominant culture in the United States both a sense of mission and a justification for expansionism,”⁹ Americans largely viewed

themselves as anti-colonialists. Most saw the nation as unique to its European counterparts for its stated rejection of empire, and justified western continental settlement using religious terms, often referencing an American divine decree. Though some exploits challenge the anti-colonialist narrative, such as the US occupation of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and for some, westward continental expansion itself, Americans rationalized their anti-imperialist claims by concentrating on economic investment, as opposed to military conquest, to exert influence in foreign nations, most of which were in close proximity to the US.

Rooted in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, which stressed that further European intervention in the Western Hemisphere would be met with US force, Americans saw their foreign policy as one which protected the nineteenth-century independence movements in Latin America from their mostly Spanish and Portuguese occupiers. In the early twentieth century, Theodore Roosevelt expanded on the Monroe Doctrine through his Roosevelt Corollary, which designated the US as the sole mediator in disputes between Central/ South American countries and European powers, often involving the payments of international debts. The purpose for the policy enhancement was to strengthen America's global position and stave off European attempts to intervene in cases of Latin American misbehavior. Many historians view the Roosevelt Corollary as a means to further solidify America's leadership role in the Western Hemisphere, as it compelled the nation to act, militarily if necessary, within countries under its influence to prevent outside European meddling. It is with these developments fresh in mind that Wilson invaded Haiti in 1915.

The official catalyst for Wilson's decision to intervene was the assassination of Haitian President Jean Sam. Sam was the sixth president in just four years, and along with most of his predecessors, he met a brutal death.¹⁰ Some scholars view Wilson's concerns over a probable

Haitian insurrection, along with the advent of World War I, as the overarching reasons for the deployment of US Marines to the tiny island of Hispaniola. Others point to imperialist ambitions, based largely on patriarchal cultural assumptions, as well as financial motives. With regards to WWI, which broke out in 1914, the fear of German influence on Hispaniola, the island home of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, was a persuasive argument for US intervention. This line of reasoning pushed forth the possibility of German occupation as a threat to American interests in Haiti, as well as a danger to Americans at home due to the country's location.¹¹ Clinton would echo similar concerns in 1994, as he sold the political and social instability in neighboring Haiti as a direct menace to American national security interests.

US military forces that were deployed to Haiti in 1915 checked some of the chaos engulfing the country. The US remained in Haiti for eighteen years, until Franklin Delano Roosevelt withdrew the last of the Marines in 1934. During the time of US occupation, "a series of puppet presidents" were put into place by the Americans, so Haitians showed little interest in their own political affairs.¹² Their apathy undoubtedly strengthened some of the more patronizing viewpoints put forth by those, like Wilson, who felt the Haitian people needed American guidance and leadership, backed by a strong US military presence. According to Jeffrey Sommers, a specialist on international political economies, developmental states, and hegemonic transitions, Wilson reconciled his actions in Haiti with the stated claim of anti-imperialism as a "US ethos," and presented America as "a nation whose existence rested on ethical and moral values from its democratic form of government."¹³ Sommers' assessment of Wilson's expansionist endeavor sees its reflection in the subsequent policy of democratic enlargement put forth by the Clinton national security team. For this reason, as well as Wilson's idealism with regards to foreign entanglements, the foreign policy approach initially proposed by

Anthony Lake, Warren Christopher, and Madeleine Albright in 1993 is often described as Wilsonian in its foundation. Like Wilson eventually did in 1917, when he committed US troops to the war in Europe, Clinton often had to eschew idealism when confronted with the realities of international crises.

The US never did reap much economic benefit from Haiti. Therefore, those charging Wilson with imperialist actions based on financial concerns stand upon weak ground. The fear of disorder in the American sphere of influence, combined with World War I, constitutes a stronger case, as does Wilson's own progressive, paternalistic views towards the Haitian people and his attempt to gift them with democratic governance. The Haitians, predictably, deeply resented the American occupation, seeing it as an impediment to their national sovereignty. Decades later, the situation remained somewhat similar. As the US had no real economic interest in Haiti during the 1990s, the only real basis for selling American intervention in Haiti revolved around humanitarian concerns or interests of national security. Clinton combined the two, and once again, the US was on its way to bring some form of political stability to Haiti, using American military strength as the only feasible delivery mechanism. And similar to the first American venture into Haiti, most Haitians did not condone excessive US interference in their affairs.

After Americans discontinued their Haitian occupation in the first part of the twentieth century, the political system within the Caribbean nation further devolved. The US presence thus had little effect on the implementation of successful democratic institutions. The Marines oversaw "public works, tax collection, treasury management, and the development of a native Haitian Constabulary, which was Haiti's first professional military force."¹⁴ Some of these actions were beneficial, but one major problem persisted. The Americans often excluded

Haitians from exuding any real authority on their own. US forces were also accused of discriminating against the poorer black population in favor of the elite mulatto class, which deepened existing resentment among Haitian citizens.¹⁵ Once the US pulled out of Haiti, instability persisted, as did the consistent turnover of national leaders, mostly by violent means. The economic and social status of Haiti showed no significant progress, with only some roads, public buildings, and medical facilities being built or expanded during the occupation period.¹⁶ Then, in 1957, Haitians finally gained a strong leader in Francois Duvalier. But the implementation of their new president and his dictatorial regime merely ushered in a yet another violent reign of terror; one that would last for almost three decades.

Duvalier, known as “Papa Doc,” gained power with the backing of the Haitian Army by promising the country’s “poor black majority, who for years...[were] exploited by a small clique of mulattoes”¹⁷ a more efficient and friendly government to meet their needs. Almost immediately, Papa Doc reneged on this hollow promise. With the implementation of his secret police force, known as the feared Tontons Macoutes, which is Creole for “bogeymen,”¹⁸ Duvalier utilized imprisonment, rape, torture, and execution to solidify his hold on the Haitian people. His regime imposed irregular, unofficial taxes, often in the form of tributes, on businessmen and peasants alike, and often mutilated political detractors, “sometimes leaving a victim’s severed head on display in a marketplace as a warning to others.”¹⁹ The US cut foreign aid to the nation in the early 1960s, even though Haiti held the status of the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. The population under Papa Doc lived in a perpetual state of brutality and poverty. Disease, hunger, and random atrocities were the norm. In 1964, Papa Doc declared himself President for Life, and met little resistance in doing so. He relied on a cult of personality, based largely on his own successful manipulation of Haitians’ collective belief in

Voodoo spirits and his supposed possession of supernatural powers, to strengthen his authority.²⁰ During Papa Doc's rule, "at least 50,000 people were killed, millions were driven into exile, and many of those who remained were tortured."²¹ No significant opposition to his power existed.

When Papa Doc died in 1971, his son, Jean-Claude, assumed his father's role with an equally vicious ardor, much to the dismay of the Haitian people. Jean-Claude, who went by the nickname "Baby Doc," seamlessly continued the Duvalier legacy and avoided any political upheavals regarding succession. At just nineteen years old, Baby Doc, who ruled with his older sister, Marie-Denise, at his side, assumed power without disruption. The duo punished their rivals in a gruesome manner, and ruled "with an iron fist from 1971 to 1986."²² Baby Doc also utilized his father's Tonton Macoute forces, and embezzled hundreds of millions of dollars from his already severely impoverished people. His oppressive rule eventually gained the attention of international organizations, and he was seen as a flagrant violator of human rights. Both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International documented cases of his "imprisoning and torturing hundreds of Haitians, including journalists, and using violent means to silence voices of opposition."²³ Finally, after fifteen years under Baby Doc's repressive leadership, a popular revolt forced the Duvalier regime from power. Baby Doc was exiled, but his legacy of theft, savagery, and corruption remained deeply engrained in Haitian society. In the period between Baby Doc's ouster in 1986 and December 1990, five Haitian presidents were elected, and deposed. This period of political instability during the late 1980s, which existed largely under the thumb of the Haitian Army, led to a considerable influx of immigrants fleeing towards the US. Haiti was once again on America's radar.

In December 1990, Haiti held what is considered by most international observers and analysts to be the first truly free and fair elections in its history as an independent nation. The

contest brought a revered priest, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to power. Prior to the presidential election of 1990, Haitian elections were overwhelmingly fraudulent, especially during the Duvalier years. Any citizens viewed to be in opposition of Papa Doc or Baby Doc were often kept from voting, either by means of intimidation or with the use of violence. Even prior to Duvalier rule, elections were conducted in a primitive and expedient manner, which often excluded many rural areas from exercising any considerable means of influence. Corruption was rampant. For this reason, Aristide is deemed the first legitimate, democratically-elected president of Haiti.

Aristide's appeal spread largely due to his humble origins, and his position as a religious figure, which "added a messianic character"²⁴ to the prospects of his leadership. He ingratiated himself with the majority of the Haitian population, who were largely impoverished and therefore, held resentment towards previous political leaders from affluent backgrounds. Aristide also espoused the tenets of liberation theology,²⁵ born largely out of a Latin American understanding of Christian doctrine that encourages social justice and a responsibility to the poor and oppressed. These characteristics, when juxtaposed against his political opponents, who either had ties to the Duvalier regime or the US, inspired a mass movement among those who believed only Aristide could implement effective reforms in Haitian society.

The US, represented by the CIA, held some stake in the Haitian elections due primarily to the refugee crisis caused by the unstable political and economic system in Haiti. Aristide was certainly not favored by most Americans in government. Although the Duvaliers were authoritarian and cruel, they were not viewed by American foreign policy experts as susceptible to leftist, or communist, propaganda. During the Cold War, the rise of communist powers within the American sphere of influence often trumped concerns over dictatorial excesses. Aristide was

a proponent of land distribution, resisted American intervention with regards to economic interests, and was a rabid anti-imperialist. With this approach, Aristide won almost seventy percent of the Haitian vote; but he simultaneously provoked suspicion among many Americans, and in some circles, outright condemnation.

Aristide self-servingly entitled his inauguration “Haiti’s Second Independence.”²⁶ But the new Haitian president’s lack of outreach to those beyond his base caused immediate concern and disruption. Judson Jeffries, a political science scholar and specialist on issues of race, offers a sympathetic view of Aristide’s election and plans for reform. Jeffries describes Aristide as a threat to the Haitian business community and US investors due to the president’s promises to “double the minimum wage, initiate new public works projects, make the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes,...and support the growth of trade unions.”²⁷ Jeffries also makes note of Aristide’s proposals to weaken the Haitian Armed Forces (FADH), and argues that improvements to Haiti’s human rights record took place prior to Aristide’s deposal.

Caribbean specialist Philippe Girard offers evidence that contradicts Jeffries’ assessment of Aristide’s leadership prior to his forced removal from office, which consisted of a mere eight months. Girard mentions the feelings among many American foreign policy specialists that Aristide was no better than other despotic Haitian rulers. In his analysis of Clinton’s 1994 invasion, Girard states that many opponents to US intervention accused Aristide of “advocating [for] grisly acts of violence during his short tenure of power.”²⁸ A 1993 report conducted by the Congressional Research Service, and specifically, by Latin American Affairs analyst Maureen Taft-Morales, provides background for some of the American discomfort towards Aristide. Morales describes him as a “demagogue,” who “encourages...rampages, known as dechoukajes, or ‘uprooting’ in Creole, in which Tontons Macoutes are attacked or killed by angry mobs.”²⁹ In

his advocacy for class struggle, which resonated with his impoverished supporters, Aristide condoned acts of vengeance against those previously associated with the Duvalier regime. Ironically, the newly-elected president also held a long record of vocal opposition to democratic elections in Haiti. Prior to his victory, Aristide contended that “free and fair elections were impossible as long as Duvalierists still had a hold on economic and political power.”³⁰ His attitude somewhat changed once he became the beneficiary of the very democratic process he formerly denounced; though he sometimes acted in an undemocratic manner. Aristide often stepped outside of the authority given to him by the Haitian Constitution, such as his appointment of Supreme Court judges without the approval of the Senate. He was also accused of removing several newly-elected mayors, most of whom spent decades fighting the Duvaliers, in order to grant members of his political movement, known as Lavalas, local power.³¹

Following Aristide’s election, popular celebrations often led to mob violence. Aristide supporters would take to the streets and hunt down members of the Tonton Macoutes and other political detractors. The Haitian president received outside criticism, mostly from diplomats, for not only refusing to condemn the violence, but in some cases, for actually condoning it. He was seen as encouraging the brutal practice of “pere lebrun”³² as a means to spread fear among Tonton Macoutes and those responsible for their prosecution in Haitian courts. Pere lebrun is the method of burning someone alive by placing a “gasoline-soaked auto tire,” or “necklace,” around the victim’s neck and lighting a match.³³ Aristide once described this vile mob tactic in an address to his acolytes by stating:

You are watching all macoute activities throughout the country... We are watching and praying. If we catch one, do not fail to give him what he deserves. What a nice tool! What a nice instrument! What a nice device! It is a pretty one. It is elegant, attractive, splendid, graceful, and dazzling. It smells good. Wherever you go, you feel like smelling it. It is provided for by the Constitution, which bans macoutes from the political scene.³⁴

Aristide later backed away from these comments while in exile in the US. But these prior stances, as well as his many attacks upon the Haitian bourgeoisie, overshadow much of the reforms he proposed.

After tampering his rhetoric prior to the December election, Aristide enthusiastically returned to denouncing the rich, the military, and the former political elitist class. This increase in hostile condemnations alarmed his opponents, who quickly tired of his self-righteous claims against them. For this reason, a military junta, led by General Joseph Raoul Cédras, overthrew Aristide on September 30, 1991, and forced the president into exile. Cédras solidified his hold on Haiti through the use of paramilitary death squads, who ruthlessly suppressed the population. Human Rights Watch estimates that from the time of the coup through 1993, “well over 1,500 people were estimated...to have been killed.”³⁵ Under Cédras, the FADH attempted to eradicate all political, social, and professional organizations it believed to be in opposition of the junta. Students, rural activists, members of the clergy, human rights monitors, journalists, politicians and others seen as supportive of Aristide were often arrested without reason, tortured, or executed.³⁶ Intimidation and extrajudicial punishment, often gruesome, was widespread.

While awaiting international and American responses to the coup d'état, Aristide officially resided at the Haitian Embassy in Washington, D.C. Though critical of the military coup that brought the deposed Haitian leader to the US, members of the George H.W. Bush Administration also expressed concerns over Aristide's own record of abuses.³⁷ Although Bush denounced the actions of Cédras, as well as the escalation of violence and human rights atrocities that followed, the restoration of democracy, and the return of Aristide via US military force, was not considered to be in America's strategic interest.

During the 1992 campaign, Clinton criticized the ambivalence of the Bush Administration with regards to Haiti as a means to elevate his foreign policy acumen. Where Bush vacillated on his support for the ousted leader, Clinton vowed to restore Aristide to his rightful place as the democratically-elected president of Haiti. He also chastised Bush for his treatment of Haitian refugees, who fled Haiti either due to their political allegiance to Aristide, or as a means to escape their impoverishment. Deemed “boat people,” these Haitian immigrants landed in Florida in large numbers during the 1980s. The volume markedly increased in the early 1990s. In response, the Bush Administration implemented a policy of denying them entry or political asylum, which forced most to return home.³⁸ Clinton attacked this approach as “cruel,” and vowed to grant asylum to those fleeing torture, rape, imprisonment, and murder until “democracy could be restored in Haiti.”³⁹ But as he did on many other issues involving foreign conflict, Clinton mimicked the actions of his predecessor once in office, and continued the policy of intercepting Haitian refugees and sending them back without asylum.

Clinton argues that he only continued Bush’s policy of intercepting and returning Haitian immigrants because most “were...risking their lives by traveling in makeshift, rickety boats.”⁴⁰ Indeed, a number of them perished in the process. So, under the auspices of promoting safety, Clinton agreed to stop the boats and return them to Haiti. With his extension of Bush’s policy, not only was Clinton backtracking on a campaign promise; he also angered many human rights groups in the process. As a result, Clinton grew determined to take more aggressive action in Haiti to stem the tide of refugees and restore Aristide as president. But contradictory evidence suggests the Haitian immigration problem may not have been the direct result of Aristide’s removal.

In a book chronicling his father's role as Special Advisor to the Secretary of State on Haiti, author Ralph Pezzullo challenges the prevailing notion that Aristide's removal had a significant impact on why Haitians headed towards the US. *Plunging Into Haiti* documents the Clinton Administration's struggles with its Haitian policy through accounts offered by Lawrence Pezzullo, a career diplomat who served as Head of Catholic Relief Services prior to his role as a Clinton advisor on Haiti. He worked under the Carter Administration and served as US Ambassador for Nicaragua, where he is credited with convincing the authoritarian Somoza regime to abdicate its rule after being overthrown by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in 1979. The diplomat's assessment of Clinton's approach to Haiti is that the president entered into deliberations under a false assumption. Clinton "believed they [his administration] could solve in one bold stroke...[both] the refugee problem and the political crisis in Haiti."⁴¹ Like most international crises, the situation was more complex, and would require more of a commitment than Clinton was willing to extend.

The refugee issue was one of vital importance, particularly due to its impact on the politically-indispensable state of Florida. Clinton also worried about the optics involved in refusing entry to black Haitians. Clinton himself referred to Bush's refugee policy as "racist,"⁴² so it was no surprise when African-Americans began to make the same claim about him. Restoring Aristide to power seemed like the only politically viable solution. But some evidence suggests the numbers of refugees had more to do with US policy than with events in Haiti. According to Ralph Pezzullo, "the 1,318 Haitians interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard in those months [during Aristide's short tenure as president] actually exceeded the 1,132 who were picked up...preceding President Aristide's inauguration."⁴³ He adds that in the months following the coup, when Cédras brutally cracked down on anyone seen as supportive of Aristide, "only 19

Haitians were stopped at sea.”⁴⁴ These numbers challenge the working assumptions of the Clinton White House, put forth most vociferously by Aristide himself, that refugees would cease to flee Haiti once the US backed the ousted president’s restoration.

A review of these numbers suggests news reports of America’s Haitian refugee policy held more influence than Aristide. When word reached Haiti that a group of refugees were allowed to remain in Florida in October of 1991, Haitians headed towards the US in droves, with over 6,000 being intercepted by the Coast Guard the following month.⁴⁵ After Bush issued his executive order in May of 1992, which essentially banned Haitian refugees, denying them political asylum should they reach American shores, the influx halted. In June 1992, only 473 Haitians were detained and turned away. By July, this number dropped to 160.⁴⁶ Despite evidence challenging the linkage between Aristide’s removal and the refugee crisis, Clinton and the American public were influenced by the original narrative. But in his promise to end the refugee crisis, he inadvertently shifted control of the objective out of his own hands. Aristide would continuously exploit this issue to stall diplomatic efforts made by both the UN and Clinton, resisting any conciliatory demands on his part. In this case, perception was reality, and Aristide took full advantage.

On June 16, 1993, the UN voted to impose an oil embargo on Haiti in an attempt to pressure Cédras into negotiations. This action added to sanctions already put into place by the Bush Administration, working in concert with the UN and the Organization for American States (OAS). The UN also froze much of Haiti’s foreign assets. For this reason, Cédras informed the UN Special Envoy to Haiti, Dante Caputo, that he would agree to take part in negotiations with Aristide. The diplomatic meetings took place in July on Governors Island in New York. But political reconciliation would be a difficult task. Aristide demanded his restoration as president

and the destruction of the Haitian Army, while General Cédras wanted Aristide gone and Haiti left alone. The Clinton Administration was at the mercy of two maniacal leaders who would not budge. Repeatedly, Aristide told UN Special Envoy Caputo, “You have to get rid of the military.”⁴⁷ But Caputo, understanding Aristide could not allow the international community to completely solve the crisis in Haiti for him, responded by stating, “No, Mr. President, You have to get rid of the military.”⁴⁸ Aristide’s proximity to Washington, as well as his support among Democratic members of Congress, the press, and some in Hollywood, gave the leader an arrogant heir of superiority when he entered into the negotiations. But it was up to Clinton, the UN, and the OAS to implement a diplomatic agreement suitable for all parties. What these policymakers did not realize was the deep-seated distrust and fear encompassing Haitian politics for over 190 years.⁴⁹ One State Department official familiar with Haitian history remarked, “Haiti is a universe unto itself.”⁵⁰

Bernard Aronson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Intra-American Affairs, oversaw the day-to-day situation in Haiti since the coup unfolded. With a clear understanding of how both sides worked, he feared the Governors Island meeting would produce little. Anything it did generate was unlikely to change behaviors. Aronson described the FADH and General Cédras as “experts at rope a dope,” who would most certainly “procrastinate, procrastinate, and procrastinate some more” when it came to implementing any diplomatic resolution.⁵¹ Aronson also described Aristide as a “narrow, rigid man”⁵² who had two sides. In public, he was affable and agreeable. But Aronson contends that in private, Aristide was quite difficult. He would agree to certain concessions and then quickly back away from them. Aronson saw a pattern in Aristide’s approach to diplomacy. The Haitian president worked tirelessly to preserve his image as a champion for his people, but often acted in ways that lengthened their suffering.

The UN-sponsored Governors Island Agreement, signed by both Aristide and Cédras, mandated the return of Aristide to the presidency in exchange for an end to the oil embargo and the loosening of sanctions. It allowed for a transition period during which the Haitian Army would facilitate Aristide's restoration with the help of a small UN contingent. Aristide agreed to appoint a Prime Minister, install a consensus government, and replace the high command within the Army. He was given the authority to appoint a new Commander-in-Chief to replace Cédras, who agreed to an early retirement.⁵³ But the president had to promise that he would take no retributive action against Cédras or the FADH. The agreement required that he put aside his demands that the military be brought to trial and punished.⁵⁴ Sanctions would not be suspended until the alliance between the Haitian elite and the military allowed the Haitian Parliament to confirm Aristide's choice for Prime Minister. They followed through with this portion of the agreement when on August 25, the Haitian Parliament ratified the appointment of Robert Malval, Aristide's choice for Prime Minister. Both Cédras and Aristide described the accord as a "satisfactory solution to the Haitian crisis and the beginning of a process of national reconciliation."⁵⁵ But the UN, the OAS, and the Clinton Administration depended on parties who had a long history of violating previous agreements. Even so, Clinton enthusiastically embraced what he considered to be a historic moment for Haiti and "for the principle of democratic rule."⁵⁶ His celebration was premature.

On October 12, 1993, the diplomatic initiative agreed to by Cédras and his military apparatus met unexpected resistance, which resulted in another foreign policy embarrassment for the Clinton Administration. Under the Governors Island Accord, the Haitian Army was given a target date of October 30 for the return of President Aristide to the presidency. On October 11, in line with the terms of the agreement, the USS *Harlan County* headed towards Haiti carrying

225 US and Canadian members of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) to ensure Aristide's safe return and clear any obstacles to his resumption of leadership. Under the Governors Island Accords, and created by UN Security Resolution 867, UNMIH was to assist in modernizing the Haitian military and establishing a new police force.⁵⁷ When the ship approached the Port-au-Prince harbor, it was unable to dock. In the presence of television cameras and journalists, paramilitary members of the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), led by Emmanuel Constant, who had strong ties to the army under the Duvalier regime, led a violent mob of armed civilians, or *attachés*, in a demonstration against Aristide's return.⁵⁸ The far-right group surrounded the car of the US Embassy chargé d'affaires, "wielding machetes" and chanting "remember Somalia."⁵⁹ Just days prior to this incident, eighteen elite US Army Rangers were killed in the Battle of Mogadishu, and the anti-Aristide thugs on the dock used this tragedy to their advantage. On October 12, the ship's captain decided to turn around and head towards Cuba, fearing he would be fired upon. The mighty US Navy vessel was successfully intimidated into retreat by a loosely-armed, ragtag bunch of criminals. UNMIH was not allowed to carry out its September 1993 mandate. Constant and his FRAPH collaborators did not act alone; they had Cédras's approval, thereby justifying concerns over the FADH and its history of default with regards to international agreements.

The decision to withdraw the USS *Harlan County* completely undermined the diplomatic initiative agreed upon under the Governors Island Accords. Largely based on a fear of the American public equating Haitian intervention with Somalia, the US backed away from initiating any punishment for the acts of provocation. As a result, Clinton took a massive beating in the press. An article in *The New York Times* noted that the US had "seemingly capitulated in the face of opposition by the Haitian military,"⁶⁰ and illuminated the frustration of Western

diplomats involved with the negotiations. Most of the criticism regarding the ship's turnaround arose from diplomats among the "four friends"⁶¹ of Haiti, a UN group comprised of France, Venezuela, Canada and the US. The abandonment of the Governors Island stipulations for Aristide's return "delivered a serious blow to their efforts."⁶² Clinton was criticized for responding to the incident by dispatching his special advisor on Haitian affairs, Lawrence Pezzullo, along with Major General John Sheehan of the US Marine Corps, to meet with the Haitian military leaders in an attempt to salvage the agreement. In response, Western diplomats called Clinton "naïve"⁶³ in his belief that new global sanctions and a strengthened oil embargo would alter their behavior.

Cédras underhandedly maintained that he would continue to respect the Governors Island Accord, but was careful not to mention whether he would relinquish his position as required by the agreement. Political commentator Joe Klein of *Newsweek* argued that the retreat of the *Harlan County* showed that "America can be defied, even in its own backyard."⁶⁴ It was evident that Haiti's military rulers had no intention of relinquishing power, regardless of diplomatic maneuvering. In the wake of the *Harlan County* evacuation, the FADH initiated an even more relentless crackdown on those who embraced Aristide's arrival, and returned to the process of assassinating anyone seen as supportive of the agreement. An Aristide insider told *Newsweek*, "They've [the US] been telling Haitians, 'Be patient, help is on the way',... This round is over—now wait for the bloodbath."⁶⁵ Many Haitians, as well as critics across the international community, could not understand how the powerful US was incapable of dismantling the junta, and therefore, finally helping to revive Haiti's political and economic situation.

After the humiliation of the USS *Harlan County* incident, Clinton faced increasing pressure from a number of different factions, all clamoring for some sort of intervention to

remove General Cédras and restore democratic rule, in Haiti. One of the loudest of these voices was Aristide himself, who surrounded himself with expensive lobbyists demanding US intervention. To the aggravation of many political leaders in Washington, Aristide purposefully tried to escalate the immigration problem by publicly encouraging his Haitian supporters to depart from the island on “flimsy rafts and balsa-wood boats”⁶⁶ and make their way towards the US. Since most involved felt it was his removal that generated the refugee problem, Aristide knew an influx of Haitian immigrants would overwhelm local communities in Florida, resulting in greater pressure for action.

Aristide was also determined to maintain his credibility within Haiti by denouncing any suggestions that he may be a US puppet. He often publicly claimed that US support kept the Duvalier regime in power, and had a well-documented history espousing anti-American propaganda. Privately, however, Aristide begged the American government, under Presidents Bush and Clinton, to reinstate him by force. He initiated an intense public relations campaign to influence Clinton to act militarily. But he was careful never to specifically request American intervention openly.⁶⁷ He wanted Clinton to commit troops, but Aristide claimed he could be impeached under the Haitian Constitution if he were to directly ask for US military support. He attempted to solve this problem by sending a “weakly-worded letter” to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali requesting “prompt and decisive action to implement the Governors Island Accord.”⁶⁸ The substance of this correspondence was quite ironic considering Aristide and his advisors put forth the claim that he signed the agreement against his will. Even so, Clinton showed signs of capitulating to Aristide’s demands, given the Haitian president’s champions in the press and the possible political fall-out.

For this reason, many Americans, particularly the Republicans in Congress, questioned the motives behind restoring the Haitian president. Conservatives believed the notion of a Haitian democracy was an oxymoron; the Haitian people never experienced democracy, even with the election of Aristide. They concluded that living under depots, Aristide included, was all the Haitians ever knew.⁶⁹ Republican political leaders accused Aristide of implementing violent tactics against his opposition during his short time in office. They did not see the morality in using the American military to reinstate a leader who ruled using some of the same harsh methods employed by his predecessors when dealing with those who challenged him. He was elected by the people, but then removed by force. In the eyes of many American conservatives, “Haitians...were not ready to govern themselves.”⁷⁰ But other political concerns pushed Clinton farther towards his aims of returning democratic rule to the Haiti.

One of the most powerful entities in support of Aristide’s restoration was a coalition of African-American organizations who couched their demands for US intervention in Haiti in terms of race. In his analysis of the efforts by some African-American groups to equate humanitarian intervention in Haiti with national security interests, international relations specialist Michael Hughes points to a shared identity of the black experience when it comes to “oppression through colonialism and imperialism on the African continent, the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery in the United States, and systemic racism and discrimination.”⁷¹ Hughes highlights a coalition of African-Americans, whose influence on foreign policy consists primarily of lobbying American leaders on behalf of sovereign nations with majority black populations. Dismantling the South African system of Apartheid remains one of their most vociferous efforts. According to Hughes, the faction consists of:

the NAACP; the Congressional Black Caucus, formed in 1971 as an institution within congress to advance African American interests both domestic and foreign;

and TransAfrica, formed in 1977 as a private lobbying organization to advance African American interests in foreign policy circles.⁷²

Hughes' work compares the African-American response to the crises in both Haiti and Rwanda. It provides a useful point of reference that enhances the charge that action in Rwanda was deemed a political liability, while Haitian intervention was viewed as a political asset. His examination of the lobbying efforts by those comprising the faction above yields evidence of a more forceful, well-publicized means of attracting support for Aristide. Hughes references "a clear campaign by the African American lobby to influence US policy towards Haiti, and the refugee crisis in particular, "including the use of Civil Rights Era "sit-ins, protests, and hunger strikes."⁷³ No such actions were taken with regards to Rwanda, or Somalia for that matter.

Hughes blames this disparity on the locations of each crisis, but he also notes the lack of support among black Americans for strictly humanitarian interventions in foreign nations, without a clear benefit to domestic considerations. In this finding, African-Americans differed little from the rest of the American population. Haitian intervention was viewed as less costly and more aligned with American interests, given the rapid increase in immigration and the subsequent strain on social services it initiated. As a key demographic group for Democrats, the influence of the African-American community with regards to calculating the risks of intervention cannot be overstated. The crisis in Africa, though more urgent, deadly, and occurring within the "homeland,"⁷⁴ was not enough to bring these lobbying groups together. The conflict in Haiti proved more capable of providing a rallying point to alleviate the sufferings of those seen as sharing an African identity with their supporters in the US.

A significant point is how Haitian immigration began to overwhelm African-American communities in Florida, a key swing state. Again, the midterm congressional elections were only a few weeks away, and given the attention paid to the issue by black members of congress,

such as Florida Representative Alcee Hastings, political considerations most certainly figured into President Clinton's decision. New York Congressman Major Owens asserts that Haiti would have remained outside of the president's consideration were it not for the efforts of African-American leaders in organizations such as the Congressional Black Caucus and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The representative argues "if we had not pressed,"⁷⁵ Haiti would have been a second priority. Owens continues, "I think that in the final analysis, the fact that [Clinton] wanted a positive relationship with us [the Black Caucus] made him look at the situation very seriously, and made him move in a forceful way, more rapidly than he intended to."⁷⁶ The African-American lobby made no similar efforts for an effective US presence in Rwanda or Somalia. As previously noted, Somalia had an immense impact on the Clinton Administration's forceful denunciations of any proposed action to stop the genocide in Central Africa. And it did not pay a political price for doing so. Haiti was different.

Deputy Assistant for the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs, Prudence Bushnell, describes the reluctance of the Joint Chiefs to approve any action in Rwanda due to the president's chosen mission to restore Aristide in Haiti. In her interview with *Frontline*, Bushnell provides a context for this mindset. She points to the president's preference to combat the escalating situation in Haiti as a major obstacle to increasing any American role in Africa, where almost one million people were slaughtered. Somalia undoubtedly had the greatest effect on the Clinton Administration's lack of support for Rwanda, due to its impact on the collective American psyche. But Haiti served as a significant hindrance as well, particularly among leaders at the Pentagon. The Clinton Administration needed a foreign policy win, particularly against the backdrop of Somalia and the *USS Harlan County* incident. Given this presidential preference, Pentagon planners had to make the decision to divert resources from Africa and

move them to Haiti. As stated by Bushnell, “there was a reluctance to invest resources anywhere except where the president says he puts his influence and his policy.”⁷⁷ According to Bushnell, the Pentagon resisted doing anything in Rwanda out of concern for what the military knew faced its forces in the near future. She relays the stock answer she received from the Joint Chiefs whenever she demanded action to put a halt to the killings in Africa. They were unwilling to commit resources where the administration felt the US did not have “strategic interests,” and consistently explained to her “we just don’t have the resources.”⁷⁸

Following the USS *Harlan County* disaster, the Clinton Administration understood it had to restore American credibility, particularly with the Battle of Mogadishu still fresh in the public’s mind. It could no longer allow the actions of a few dozen protestors to proceed unpunished. Nor could it stand by as the Haitian military junta continued to defy international agreements and increase its abuses. But Clinton decided against immediate retributive military action. The debate over a proper response continued.⁷⁹

Senior Aide George Stephanopoulos struggled with how to advise Clinton. True to form, the young advisor believed an invasion “could be a political plus.”⁸⁰ Even though Republicans, such as John McCain (R-AZ) and Bob Dole (R-KS), both war veterans, believed Clinton’s focus on Haiti involved risking American lives to appease a political constituency, others felt a resolute US-led military action would show strength. But Stephanopoulos had his doubts. He notes that “two-thirds of the country [was] against military action in Haiti.”⁸¹ The situation under General Cédras continued to deteriorate, and Clinton resisted calls for intervention. In his account of the incident with the USS *Harlan County*, Stephanopoulos admits that he felt Aristide to be “a flake.”⁸² He refrained from giving Clinton any real policy advice on the matter due to Aristide’s own reaction to the episode, which in Stephanopoulos’s view, reaffirmed his personal

impressions of the exiled Haitian leader. After Vice-President Al Gore called Aristide to inform him of the president's decision to re-impose economic sanctions, and delay returning him to power using American military forces, Gore informed Clinton that the Haitian was "ecstatic."⁸³ Clinton was relieved. This acquiescence to Third World criminals further illuminates the president's lack of seriousness involving foreign policy decisions that have real ramifications for US credibility on the global stage.

Clinton seemed pleased that Aristide was not demanding his immediate return to Haiti. The American president sarcastically responded to Gore, "See, I told you. What would *you* rather do? Go back to Haiti, or sip champagne in Harry Belafonte's apartment?"⁸⁴ Still, Clinton remained determined to reseat Aristide, even after the CIA leaked an assessment of him as "an unstable manic-depressive."⁸⁵ He excused this analysis by stating "You can make too much of normalcy. A lot of normal people are assholes."⁸⁶

One particularly valid claim for Clinton's ultimate decision to forcefully restore Aristide comes from an unlikely source. David Gergen, a former aide to President Ronald Reagan, joined the Clinton Administration in 1993, where he served as a Senior Advisor to both the president and Secretary of State Warren Christopher. After the *Harlan County* debacle, Gergen described the political success generated by Reagan's successful invasion of Grenada just days after the devastating 1983 bombing of the US Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. To Gergen, Haiti could serve as Clinton's Grenada. Reagan addressed both events on television simultaneously. In doing so, he juxtaposed a severe blow to his Lebanon policy against a decisive military victory over Cuban forces attempting to turn Grenada into a staging ground for possible Soviet adventurism in America's backyard.⁸⁷ Reagan's October speech actually led to an increase in public support for Reagan's policy in Lebanon, even after the tragic loss of 241 Marines, who

were not there for combat purposes. After hearing Gergen out, and to the shock of the liberals in the administration, Clinton said, “The Reagan people were much better at the politics of foreign policy than we are. Look at Lebanon. They went into Grenada two days later and fixed it.”⁸⁸

The comparison to Grenada is ironic considering who carried the most influence within the Clinton national security apparatus. Many believed that Haiti was merely a “test case” for a foreign policy that placed at the forefront the defense of human rights and the advancement of democracy.⁸⁹ But a group within the administration, led by National Security Advisor Tony Lake, came to be described as “Haiti Hawks”⁹⁰ for their vociferous calls for action. Most served within the Carter Administration, and as described by *Newsweek*, “they all speak the same language, the Carteresque ‘human rights first’ policy...All hated the Central American policy of the 1980s.”⁹¹ But in May, a new comprehensive review on Haiti was conducted, and invasion plans were being prepared.

Clinton’s comparison of possible military action in Haiti to Grenada lends credibility to those, like Lt. Col. Patterson, who believe that Operation Restore Democracy was born to score a “win” after the embarrassments of Somalia and Rwanda, and amid the inaction over Bosnia.⁹² Regardless, the president had to show strength and rehabilitate America’s integrity. Even though the public was against intervention, Clinton had the skills to persuade. As noted by Paul Wolfowitz, “The use of force cannot be approached in an experimental way, by dispatching military personnel to Haiti to withdraw them if they meet opposition.”⁹³ It also does not signal effective leadership for an American president to poll other countries for their input regarding a possible US response. Clinton had to make a decision.

On July 31, 1994, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 940, authorizing the use of military force to restore Aristide, and order, to Haiti.⁹⁴ Considering the situation in Haiti to be

one of a threat to regional peace, Clinton led the effort to establish a military presence to pave the way for UNMIH. One of the deciding factors was the attempt by General Cédra's government to install Haitian Supreme Court Judge Emile Jonassaint as a "provisional president," which was a blatant attempt to replace Aristide, the legitimate president of Haiti.⁹⁵ Under Security Council Resolution 940, Chapter VII of the UN Charter was activated. The Americans began the process of coordinating member states to form a multinational force under unified (US) command, or the MFH. Towards the end of August, Clinton announced that all diplomatic efforts had been "exhausted," and "force might be used to remove the military leadership from power in Haiti and ensure the return of the democratic Government of President Aristide."⁹⁶

Clinton delivered his "Address to the Nation on Haiti" on September 15, 1994, in which he declared an upcoming invasion to "restore democratic government" in a "mission [that] is limited and achievable."⁹⁷ The president described the American role as leading an international effort, supported by the UN, to forcefully remove General Cédra and his military junta from power. Twice in the speech, Clinton references Grenada as a comparable mission, thus assuring the American people of the mission's likely success and expeditiousness. He correlated the military role with national interests by stating, "History has taught us that preserving democracy in our own hemisphere strengthens America's security and prosperity. Democracies here are more likely to keep the peace and stabilize our region."⁹⁸ After presenting a long indictment of the Haitian dictators who deposed Aristide, including recent increases in violence, Clinton spoke directly to them, warning: "Your time is up. Leave now, or we will force you from power."⁹⁹ He vowed that action must be taken to:

protect our interests; to stop the brutal atrocities that threaten tens of thousands of Haitians; to secure our borders; and to preserve stability and promote democracy

in our hemisphere and to uphold the reliability of commitments we make and the commitments others make to us.¹⁰⁰

The president spoke authoritatively about the national intolerance of brutal dictatorships that use murder, rape, torture, and mutilation as a means to intimidate and oppress their populations, especially when it occurs so close to American soil. He declared the planned action to be the only logical step forward, as three years of intense diplomatic efforts by the UN, the OAS, the Caribbean community, and six Central American presidents had failed. The US was on its way to war in Haiti.

In a letter written to Congress on September 18, in which Clinton announced the proposed troop landing, he echoed the sentiments of his September 15 speech by noting, “The United States has a particular interest in responding to gross abuses of human rights when they occur *so close to our shores*.”¹⁰¹ As referenced by Hyland, Clinton’s remarks had the “quaint aura of the Monroe Doctrine”¹⁰² attached to them. Haiti was in the American sphere of influence, thus it demanded US assistance. But Clinton had yet to fully give up on diplomacy. On September 17, in a final diplomatic effort, the President sent a diplomatic team into Haiti in a last-ditch attempt to solve the crisis by peaceful means. At the same time the US-led MFH headed towards Haitian shores, former President Jimmy Carter, General Colin Powell, and Senator Sam Nunn were dispatched to Haiti to convince General Cédras and his military leaders to resign. It was a last-minute maneuver, but it worked.¹⁰³ Clinton remained dedicated to the invasion deadline despite the progress, or lack thereof, of Carter and his team, so the Americans held the upper hand. Cédras and his team agreed to transfer power back to Aristide, and leave the island nation for good. With this agreement firmly delivered, the large American force landed in Haiti completely unopposed.¹⁰⁴ Not a shot was fired. Given the choice of an imminent invasion

or resignation with amnesty, the military junta finally gave in. Almost immediately, the president received a “bump” in the polls.¹⁰⁵

Under the agreement, the FADH and police forces complied with the stipulation of cooperating with the US military, which would clear the way for UNMIH personnel to enter the country without fear of harm to their personal safety. This arrangement is partially credited with setting the Haiti mission apart from what occurred in Somalia. But another difference existed. Although held under dictatorial rule for almost two centuries, Haiti was a cohesive nation, with a shared culture and national consciousness. Somalia had no such legacy around which to coalesce. Unlike Haiti, Somalia lacked basic national institutions, such as a parliament or constitution, upon which to rely. Additionally, the Haitians had a leader in Aristide. As difficult as the Haitian president could be, he still provided the US with someone to use as a point of contact in negotiations. Somalia lacked any similar authority, with the exception of General Aideed, who violently opposed any American diplomatic attempts.¹⁰⁶

Since no organized military opposition to US forces existed, the American troops relied upon the local military to aid in civilian control. What they feared most was civil unrest. Once the American forces landed in Haiti, their mission became less clear. Within one month, Aristide resumed his position as president. With Clinton’s credibility restored, he turned his attention elsewhere. But any clear goals for the operation during the occupation period did not exist. In an effort to prevent American casualties, and in combination with battle fatigue, US commanders on the ground instructed soldiers to take a more passive role in peacekeeping.¹⁰⁷ This task fell to the very army US forces originally planned to fight. The US-led multinational force reduced the availability of weaponry by raiding some FADH compounds, but they mostly passed on the job of law and order to the Haitian Army and the newly-created Haitian National Police (HNP).¹⁰⁸

Along with the restoration of Aristide, the Clinton Administration also set goals of developing the Haitian economy and solidifying the democratic process. By the end of his term, neither of these aims were met. Few members of the FADH, who committed such heinous violence against Haitian civilians, ever answered for their crimes. Reforms for Haitian courts, prisons, and banks were passed, but due to a lack of funds, they rarely succeeded.¹⁰⁹ Even the overarching theme of democratic restoration suffered once Americans retreated from taking an active role during the occupation. Although they were greeted as liberators upon the return of Aristide, the operation quickly devolved into one Haitians referred to as a “humiliation.”¹¹⁰ Significant opposition to US-directed financial reforms stalled economic development, which led to continued poverty and social ills. Foreign aid was squandered, violence persisted, and political instability returned. Clinton approved the initial portion of the mission, and he achieved one of his stated aims. But he lacked the will to remain involved to solve the challenges facing Haiti. Aristide was one of the main obstacles. He attacked foreign donors and ignored voices of opposition. As a result, political leadership at all levels in Haiti suffered. He continued these actions when he was re-elected in 2004. And once again, he was forcibly removed from office. Haiti remains mired in poverty, corruption, and chaos.

In his assessment of Clinton’s intervention in Haiti, Lt. Col. Patterson points to the military’s frustration with the president’s inconsistency with regards to the use of America’s Armed Forces. Patterson illuminates the disparity in support for the president’s chosen mission, and others for which Clinton showed little interest or resolve. Patterson expressed his disdain over the helplessness felt by those tasked with providing strict humanitarian aid in Rwanda, as well as the administration’s incompetence when it came to providing much-needed equipment to troops in Somalia prior to the Battle of Mogadishu. But Patterson almost laughingly references

the multitude of gear flown into Haiti, such as jeeps, communications equipment, and most importantly, the disproportionately large number of US soldiers, including the entire 82nd Airborne Division. He notes, “There was so much military metal, the ramp was literally sinking into the bay [in the Port-au-Prince harbor].”¹¹¹ Given his own experiences with peacekeeping missions gone awry, Patterson concluded:

The disparity of this picture compared with the one I’d seen in Somalia was revealing and disappointing. When casualties were possible, as in Somalia, President Clinton used strong rhetoric and little action. When casualties were unlikely, he used overwhelming force.¹¹²

American troops remained in Haiti for five years. After reinstating Aristide, he adhered to his role under the Haitian Constitution, and peacefully passed the presidency on to his successor when his term ended, leading to the first successful transition of power in Haitian history.

Despite this milestone, significant problems continued to plague the country. After the US spent almost \$3 billion in Haiti, the economy only worsened, unemployment reached above seventy percent, and drug trafficking increased.¹¹³ The military forces stationed in Haiti steered clear of internal issues, particularly to avoid an international incident. Their confidence in Operation Restore Democracy, and Operation Uphold Democracy, which transferred the original mission back into UN hands, lessened significantly as they watched the disorder, corruption, and poverty around them.

Aside from what occurred in the years following Operation Restore Democracy, the mission did restore some of the president’s credibility. Though the 1994 Congressional Elections resulted in a massive Republican takeover, Clinton was pragmatic enough to work with the opposition on domestic issues, and parlayed this bipartisan effort into some successful policies at home. For this reason, Americans do look back upon the 1990s as the decade of prosperity. As for peace...despite the relatively benign situation in Haiti once US forces

intervened, global disorder continued to challenge Clinton and his administration, who lacked both the willingness and perspective to confront issues of foreign struggles with any sense of duty. Even though instability in Haiti provided some consequences for the US, given its status as an American neighbor, it would pale in comparison to deliberate, direct attacks on US interests, which simultaneously progressed unmolested.

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Chapter 7. A MISCALCULATED FOE: OSAMA BIN LADEN AND AL QAEDA ON THE MARCH

"Something is wrong. We are in a rapid descent. We are all over the place... I see buildings. We are flying low. We are flying very, very low. We are flying way too low. Oh my God, we are flying way too low. Oh my God!"¹ These were the last words heard by the American Airlines Operations Center, spoken by one of their flight attendants, Madeline Amy Sweeney, just before the line went dead. For twenty-five minutes, Sweeney and her colleague, Betty Ong, attempted to remain calm and describe the hijacking of their flight by "Middle Eastern men."² Each woman grew increasingly frightened by her lack of contact with the cockpit, but even amid this fear, both were able to relay the unfolding events, as well as the seat numbers of the hijackers. American Airlines Flight 11, from Boston to Los Angeles, struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center (WTC) in Manhattan, at 8:46am Eastern Time, on September 11, 2001.

New Yorkers on the street, their attention drawn to smoke bellowing out of the North Tower, gasped as they witnessed United Airlines Flight 175 slam into the WTC's South Tower at 9:03am, killing all on board, and an unknown number within the building, upon impact.³ It was now clear the United States was under attack. As the catastrophe unfolded on live television, friends and relatives of those either traveling on the hijacked planes, or stuck inside the structures hit, watched in horror as the lives of their loved ones were stolen. Melissa Doi of Queens, a manager at IQ Financial Systems, was trapped on the 83rd floor of the South Tower. Doi remained on the phone with a 9-11 dispatcher for over twenty minutes as she waited for help to arrive. Struggling to breathe, she informed the operator, "It's so hot, I'm burning up."⁴ The dispatcher repeatedly apologized, and tried to calm her. Doi then tearfully cried, "I'm going to die, aren't I?"⁵ The 9-11 operator desperately attempted to reassure her: "No, no, no...Ma'am,

you're not going to die. Say your prayers. You're doing great. We're going to get help.”⁶ At 9:59am, the South Tower collapsed. The North Tower tumbled to the ground less than a half an hour later. Doi was one of thousands killed in the WTC attacks.

Barbara Olson, a best-selling author and wife of then-US Solicitor-General Ted Olson, called her husband to inform him that her plane, American Airlines Flight 77, was hijacked by men with box cutters and knives. As soon as the call cut out, Mr. Olson notified the Department of Justice of his wife's account. At 9:37am, AA Flight 77 slammed into the Pentagon.⁷

Terrorists had struck the heart of America's most visible emblem of military strength.

Americans were in disbelief. Within an hour and forty-two minutes of the commercial airliner strikes on the WTC Twin Towers, and with hundreds of police, firefighters, and Port Authority officers working to evacuate as many people possible, each building disappeared from the New York skyline. In Washington D.C., the Pentagon was on fire, with a gaping hole in a large section of its five-sided structure. The total number of people who lost their lives, which eventually reached 2,996,⁸ would not be known for weeks.

The only glimmer of hope on this dark day arrived among unraveling reports of heroic actions taken aboard United Airlines Flight 93. Believed to be headed towards either the White House or Capitol Building, a determined group of passengers on this final hijacked plane, after being made aware of the hijackers' true intentions through phone calls, decided to rush the cockpit. Passenger Thomas Burnett informed his wife, “I know we're going to die... There's three of us who are going to do something about it.”⁹ In a purely American act of defiance, another passenger, Todd Beamer, delivered a line that would become synonymous with the upcoming reckoning for those responsible for the attacks on September 11, 2001: “Let's roll!”¹⁰

The cockpit voice recorder on Flight 93 “captured the sounds of the passenger assault...the assault was sustained.”¹¹ Confirmed by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States in *The 9/11 Commission Report*, the resolute Americans aboard this plane thwarted the hijackers’ attempts to destroy another national symbol, losing their lives in the process. What began with the chilling message, “We have some planes,”¹² communicated by a hijacker to a shocked Boston air traffic controller, ended with the most pivotal, deadly attack ever to occur on American soil. America was at war. From the Oval Office, as the harrowing day ended, President George W. Bush addressed a mourning nation, and vowed to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Historical analysis of 9/11, in addition to the multitude of government inquiries, media coverage, and personal accounts, is overwhelming. Virtually every American alive at the time vividly recalls where he or she was that day, and how the tragic events personally affected each of them. Blame for the attacks cannot be placed on one person, unless that person is Osama Bin Laden, who, along with his Al Qaeda terrorist network, orchestrated and funded the operation. Within the US government, mistakes were certainly made. But hindsight brings clarity to signals that, at the time, were obscure. Americans lacked the vision to foresee the possibility, and the magnitude, of 9/11. However, this admission does not rationalize inaction, especially with regards to prior attacks delivered specifically against US interests. Within a mere decade, what began as loosely-formed, “petty Muslim extremist groups wandering the deserts, on the margins of international relations,” developed into “a full blown terror network operating in [over] 55 countries.”¹³ Al Qaeda matured in the face of American complacency.

The responsibility for monitoring the metastasizing terror group fell on many agents and analysts who worked within multiple government agencies in the years leading up to 9/11. The

sense of guilt felt by these dedicated employees is palpable. But it is important to document how prior Al Qaeda attacks against American targets were received by senior level officials, most notably President Clinton. Even though it is irresponsible to suggest that a specific action, or actions, could have stopped the brutal events of 9/11, it is beneficial to document how a lack of attention and response by the Clinton Administration allowed the culprits the time and space necessary to strengthen their association and plot their deadly assault against the US.

During Clinton's eight years as president, Al Qaeda grew to be the most sophisticated, organized, and deadly terror organization in the world. Some members of the US intelligence community observed this progression, and began notifying the president regularly just prior to his second term. They sent warnings. But even they did not foresee the level of devastation that would occur. According to the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, one of the most consequential deficiencies that allowed the calamitous homeland strike to proceed unimpeded was a failure of imagination.¹⁴ Attacks on American interests that preceded 9/11 presented government officials with a pattern, as did the statements made by the designated leader of Al Qaeda. While Bin Laden was at war, and publicly declared his violent intentions, the US was investigating crimes. Americans were handing out warrants overseas as terrorists in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Africa were building bombs.

Clinton's foreign policy centered on the perception that a world "governed by globalism, free markets, technology advances and soft liberalism"¹⁵ would choose peace and global cooperation over conflict. The Clinton Administration began disposing of their initial policies of democratic enlargement and aggressive multilateralism early on, particularly after the failed peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. But they could never reach a healthy middle ground between realism and idealism in foreign affairs. The post-Cold War was supposed to usher in a peace

dividend upon which Clinton could decrease investment in the military and adequately fund his domestic programs. He therefore resisted most requests for more assets in the fight against international terrorism. It was not until the end of his second term that he began to advocate for increased funding for the CIA in its fight against Al Qaeda. As with so many other instances of foreign conflict during his tenure, the world refused to cooperate with his preferred areas of interest. Unfortunately for Clinton, and Americans in general, foreign policy proposals based on such ideals as free markets and the expansion of civil liberties meant nothing to Islamic fundamentalists determined to destroy those they deemed responsible for the exploitation of Muslim lands and people.

Osama Bin Laden originally gained notoriety as a wealthy financier of the successful Mujahedeen effort to oust the Soviet Union from Afghanistan during the 1980s. The Saudi-born son of the head of the Binladen Group, who had close ties with the royal family due to the company's massive investment in The Kingdom's infrastructure, was instilled with animosity towards the US at a young age. After his father's death, members of the Saudi royal family took him in as their own. Growing up in the 1970s, Bin Laden became engrossed in the anti-Western, anti-Israeli Arab nationalism sweeping across the Middle East after the Yom Kippur War and the Arab oil embargoes. He informed a reporter in 1998, "Every grown-up Muslim hates Americans, Christians, and Jews...It is part of our belief and our religion. Ever since I was a boy, I have been harboring feelings of hatred towards America."¹⁶ Bin Laden became a dedicated follower of Wahhabism, which is a strict, fundamentalist view of Islam with a firm adherence to Sharia Law that originated in Saudi Arabia. He was further radicalized in his position as the primary fundraiser for Maktab al-Khidmat lil Mujahidin (Afghan Services Bureau), an organization providing support for volunteer fighters, who traveled to Afghanistan from various

Arab nations to fight the Soviets.¹⁷ In this role, Bin Laden traveled the world, raising several billion dollars, and “establishing branches in over fifty countries for encouraging recruits and raising money.”¹⁸ These actions would serve as the foundation upon which he would build his terror network shortly after the Soviets left Afghanistan.

At the time of the Soviet-Afghan War, the CIA, which funneled millions in funding and support towards the Afghan effort, initially regarded Bin Laden as merely a wealthy philanthropist. In his memoirs of his time at the agency, former CIA Director George Tenet categorically states, “[the] CIA had no contact with Bin Ladin during the Soviet’s Afghan misadventure.”¹⁹ In 1986, Bin Laden established his first training camp in Afghanistan, and from this location, led a group of guerrilla fighters in a successful stand-off against Soviet forces. From this endeavor, Bin Laden created Al Qaeda, which is Arabic for “The Base.”²⁰ In 1989, when the Soviets left Afghanistan in defeat, an internal battle began for control of the region. The conflict was often among rival tribes, but two distinct powers emerged from it: The Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Both factions would play integral roles in Bin Laden’s quest to wage war on the US.

Prior to the departure of Soviet forces, Bin Laden was introduced to a radical Egyptian doctor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who shared the Saudi’s militant vision of Islam. Both Zawahiri and Bin Laden had relationships with high-ranking members of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), who held a mutual view of continuing the training centers in Afghanistan in order to prepare for a fight against “disloyal, secular Muslim regimes, and...non-Muslim countries.”²¹ With the ISI’s blessing, Al Qaeda increased the numbers of terror training camps throughout Afghanistan, and Bin Laden embraced his position as the leader of the new jihadist movement.

Upon Bin Laden's return to Saudi Arabia, the Al Qaeda founder grew incensed at his own government for its cooperation with the US during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. After the Saudis denied his offer of aid in their conflict with Iraq, and instead allied with the Americans, allowing them to install military bases in what extremists considered Muslim holy lands, Bin Laden departed for Sudan. Regardless of his family's prominence, the Saudis were content to see him go.²² They stripped him of his citizenship in 1994.²³

During Clinton's two terms as president, Islamic extremists, largely recruited and supported by Bin Laden, expanded their funding, reach, and capabilities for destruction. The first known strike against the US by Al Qaeda occurred in Yemen in December 1992, under the George H.W. Bush Administration, and during Clinton's transition period as President-Elect. The Yemen hotel bombings targeted US troops in Aden who were headed towards the UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia. Neither Bush nor Clinton were aware of Al Qaeda's connection to the Somali warlords responsible for the unrest in the African nation at the time. Due to a premature detonation, the attacks in Yemen achieved little success. Two Australian tourists were killed, with no American casualties. One month later, shortly after Clinton's inauguration, the World Trade Center was attacked for the first time on February 26, 1993. A truck bomb that detonated in an underground garage killed six, including a pregnant woman, and seriously wounded 1500 others. The first foreign terrorist attack against Americans civilians at home was treated as a matter for law enforcement, and not an act of war.

At the time of the WTC bombing, Clinton's first nominee for Attorney General, Zoe Baird, was abandoned by the administration due to her neglect of Social Security taxes for her illegal immigrant household help. The Senate was therefore in the process of approving Janet Reno to replace the president's initial choice for head of the Department of Justice.

Additionally, Clinton's new FBI Director, Louis Freeh, would not be confirmed by the Senate until August 6, 1993. Prior to Freeh's tenure, William Sessions, a Bush appointee, remained head of the Bureau, despite Clinton's intense distrust of him. Due to the Clinton Administration's treatment of the WTC attack as a law enforcement issue, the absence of an Attorney General, as well as a virtually leaderless Federal Bureau of Investigation, illuminates the initial chaos surrounding the investigation. Investigative journalist Richard Miniter describes the detachment embodied by the president in reference to the 1993 WTC attack by noting, "Clinton never even visited the site to assess the damage, nor did he order swift retaliation. It was the start of a pattern."²⁴ Clinton's only speech on the bombing came in the form of a radio address, which largely consisted of his planned economic programs.

Though the issue should have been treated as a detriment to national security, which would mobilize additional intelligence and investigative resources, Freeh notes, "Ever since the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center, the Bureau had been all but obsessed with terrorism and its proponents."²⁵ The FBI took the matter as an affront to domestic security, and began to methodically build a case. But chain of custody demands prohibited the sharing of evidence with other investigative agencies. The Bureau gathered evidence, not intelligence. It was a different approach from methods used by the CIA. The FBI sought justice through the application of American law, with prosecution and conviction as its ultimate goal. Their meticulous work resulted in the 1995 conviction of Sheikh Abdul Rahman, the head of a terrorist organization known as the Islamic Group. Prosecuted by the US Attorney's Office in New York, and specifically, Andrew McCarthy, the "Blind Sheik," as Rahman was known, was given a life sentence for his leading role in the 1993 WTC bombing.²⁶ He died while imprisoned in February 2017.

FBI counterterrorism agents were aware of the Blind Sheik's role as a spiritual leader for Al Qaeda. The investigation into the 1993 bombing also generated the uncovering of plans to bomb bridges, tunnels, and symbolic buildings in Manhattan, including UN headquarters. The Bureau referred to this operation as the "Day of Terror" plot.²⁷ Much of Rahman's planning for this attack was done within the US, and the evidence was under the protection of a sealed indictment. The CIA would not receive the full findings of the FBI's investigation until 1996, when the details of the case were made public.

Although some of the terrorists directly responsible for the 1993 WTC bombing were tried and convicted in criminal court, the escalation of terror activities, and the expansion of Al Qaeda, proved the US legal system was becoming increasingly incapable of responding to these international threats. Bin Laden declared war on the US, and acted accordingly. The CIA began to put itself on a war-footing against Al Qaeda in the mid-1990s, recognizing the magnitude of hostile danger Americans faced from Islamic combatants. The FBI, too, understood the ramifications of the expanding global jihadist network, but operated under greater restraint than its foreign intelligence counterpart. Unfortunately, American political leaders, the president chief among them, refused to follow the lead of the nation's chief law enforcement arm and its premier intelligence agency.

The biggest failure to come from the 1993 WTC bombing investigation was the exclusion of the CIA. Since the attack was not treated as an international counterterrorism operation, or act of war, the CIA had no access to the evidence gathered. Unfortunately for the CIA, as well as other intelligence agencies, "every lab test, every scrap of paper, every interview, every lead, every clue from overseas was theirs [the FBI's] alone."²⁸ Initially, the FBI lost two vital Al Qaeda operatives suspected in the attack. The Bureau eventually came through on one. In 1995,

agents captured Ramzi Yousef in Pakistan. He was staying in a guesthouse known to be funded by Bin Laden. Yousef was tried and convicted in New York, but was never detained or adequately interrogated. If he was subjected to harsher forms of questioning, perhaps he would have revealed his relationship to fellow terrorist Khalid Sheik Mohammed (KSM), who also escaped to Pakistan following the bombing, which he helped plan.

Yousef was KSM's nephew, and while in custody, he never revealed the level reached by his uncle within the command structure of Al Qaeda. KSM, now notoriously regarded as the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, narrowly escaped the grip of the FBI and CIA in 1996.²⁹ KSM is now perhaps best known for the questionable treatment he received after his capture in 2003. His detention, and the methods used by the CIA to gain intelligence from him, became synonymous with the Agency's controversial use of enhanced interrogation techniques—or torture—depending on one's perspective. Regardless, it was what KSM revealed, both directly and indirectly, during this process that would eventually lead agents and analysts to a valued, and highly protected, Bin Laden courier. After locating the courier, the CIA finally discovered Bin Laden living in Abbottabad, Pakistan. On May 1, 2011, almost ten years after the deadly attacks of 9/11, the elite Navy Seal Team 6 raided his compound and put a bullet in his head.

According to a 1996 State Department assessment of terror patterns, the US counterterrorist policy stressed “treating terrorists as criminals.”³⁰ It advocated their aggressive pursuit, but emphasized the application of the “rule of law.”³¹ Many in the law enforcement community took issue with this approach. Until 9/11, terror investigations were often treated as those conducted against organized crime syndicates. Freeh states he does not know one FBI agent who believed this approach was sufficient. In his mind, no one thought a “criminal

investigation was a reasonable alternative to global intelligence gathering, or military and diplomatic action.”³² Freeh sarcastically argues:

The enemy meanwhile was arming itself with trucks loaded with five thousand pounds of explosive, with suicide boats...Our warrants could help us snatch a Ramzi Yousef and bring him back to the United States to face justice. Their trucks and boats...could rip the face off a military barracks, split open embassies...al Qaeda is not the Cosa Nostra, and Osama bin Laden is not a John Gotti or a Ted Kaczynski.³³

One glaring example illuminates the limits faced by the FBI in its fight against global terrorism prior to 9/11. It was not until June 1998 that the Bureau was able to secure an indictment against Bin Laden for the plot to murder Americans in Aden, Yemen in 1992.³⁴ But, Freeh states, “Those are the tools we had available to us, the ones our legal system and our political system outfitted us with to wage the war on terrorism.”³⁵ As the attacks on US interests abroad became more numerous, and more destructive, the CIA and the American military each felt it had to assume a greater role.

As noted prior, the Clinton Administration started out on an uncomfortable footing with the military due to the controversy over lifting the ban on gays serving in the military. The tension escalated over the deep defense cuts planned in the president’s budget. Then-House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich warned Clinton in the days after the 1993 WTC bombing to proceed cautiously with regards to slashing funding and decreasing military capabilities. Prophetically, Gingrich urged, “there’s a very real requirement for human intelligence and military strength. Every time we have any display of weakness, any display of timidity...there are people on the planet eager to take advantage of us.”³⁶ Human intelligence (HUMINT), in particular, has proved indispensable in the post-9/11 War on Terror. But neither the military, nor the CIA and its Counterterrorism Center (CTC), were privy to the information gathered on the first WTC attack, and the Agency’s HUMINT capabilities were largely deficient. To make

matters worse, Clinton's first choice for Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) for the CIA, James Woolsey, resigned in 1994, barely two years after his appointment, primarily due to his lack of access to the president and the CIA being shut out of the WTC investigation. In his short tenure, Woolsey never had one personal, face-to-face meeting with Clinton.

Although Clinton apparently refused to consider the 1993 WTC bombing a significant threat to national security, the president did fervently push for the capture of Yousef. Instead of tasking the CIA, military generals, or members of his cabinet with encouraging international cooperation in locating the terrorist, the president turned to a National Security Council (NSC) staffer, Richard A. Clarke.³⁷ His purpose for such an unusual, and low-profile appointment was to keep all operations regarding Yousef secret. While a public declaration and a shared sense of mission would have generated more evidence in the process of the manhunt, Clinton had to assure any failure of Clarke's would not fall on him. Clarke's success, however, would also be his. For Clinton, Yousef "had to be caught, preferably before the 1996 presidential election."³⁸ The FBI came through for Clinton on Yousef, but Bin Laden remained in the shadows.

The pressure on the FBI in its role as the foremost authority on investigating foreign terrorists began to build, mainly due to reasons of ineffectual diplomacy and restricted access. On June 25, 1996, a truck bomb detonated directly outside of the Khobar Towers, a complex that housed members of the US Air Force and American contractors. The attack resulted in the deaths of nineteen American soldiers and one Saudi. Almost 500 were wounded. The responsibility for the Khobar Towers Bombing in Khobar, Saudi Arabia, though mostly assumed to be the work of a Shia faction operating in The Kingdom, is still somewhat disputed. Officially, the attack is believed to have been carried out by Saudi members of Hezbollah, and sponsored by the Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. But many still believe it to be at least

partially the work of Al Qaeda. In an interview in 2006, former Clinton Defense Secretary William Perry admitted that he believed Osama Bin Laden orchestrated the attack on the Khobar Towers. Though the Al Qaeda leader commended the action, most evidence points to an Iranian-directed attack carried out by Hezbollah elements in Saudi Arabia. However, as noted in *The 9/11 Commission Report*, “While the evidence of Iranian involvement is strong, there are also signs that Al Qaeda played some role, as yet unknown.”³⁹ US intelligence later uncovered evidence of plans devised by the terrorist network to attack a US target in Saudi Arabia. Al Qaeda sent weapons into the region for this purpose, and some of Bin Laden’s associates “took credit” for the Khobar Towers attack.⁴⁰

Confusion with regards to who was ultimately responsible for the bombing of the Khobar Towers arose due to limited American access to evidence as the investigation progressed. Immediately after the attack, Freeh and a team of FBI investigators, as well as then-Director of Central Intelligence, John Deutch, CIA agents, and military officials, headed towards Saudi Arabia, with the aim of investigating the scene before evidence disappeared or was compromised. Through the Saudi Ambassador, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, as well as the Saudi Deputy Chief of Mission to the US, Rihad Massoud, Freeh received some level of initial participation. Clinton made a call to Prince Bandar to let him know the FBI Director was in charge, but stopped short of exerting any influence with King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah. The Saudi royal family had to manage a delicate balance between the ruling monarchy and its more fundamentalist population of traditional Wahhabis, who exerted control over mosques and local villages.⁴¹ Allowing Americans access to suspects captured in the years following the attack would be interpreted as weak; the royals would be viewed as US puppets.

Freeh suggests the president was indifferent to the attacks on US interests abroad; the same attacks that consumed the FBI and other law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The American public paid less attention to foreign affairs than domestic ones, so the president did not experience much pressure for retaliation. But since the FBI again took the lead on the Khobar Towers bombing, it remains a sore spot for Freeh. He vowed to uphold the president's own promise of delivering justice to the loved ones of those killed, and found it difficult to maintain his word in the face of the administration's obstruction. Clinton, whose decision it was to put the FBI in charge of the investigation, which even Freeh believed to be more effective in the hands of the CIA and the US military, offered no resistance when the Saudis quickly beheaded a few low-level terror suspects without first informing the Americans.⁴²

Although the man has little in the way of credibility, even with those on the Right who, for a short time, entertained his insight into Clinton, Dick Morris served as the president's top political strategist, to the dismay of many who worked within the administration. Prior to Morris being ousted during Clinton's second term for unsavory moral behavior, he diligently worked behind the scenes, and behind the backs of other trusted advisors, in an effort to gauge each statement, action, piece of legislation, and domestic or foreign development through relentless polling. Therefore, Morris's statements regarding Clinton's adherence to public opinion can be viewed as notable, even while taking them with the proverbial grain of salt.

In reference to the bombing of the Khobar Towers in June of 1996, which occurred in the middle of the president's re-election campaign, Morris recalls that he "ordered an immediate poll," because "he was concerned about how Clinton looked in the face of [the attack] and whether people blamed him."⁴³ While initial polling was encouraging, TWA Flight 800 accidentally exploded over the Atlantic Ocean the following month, and many Americans

viewed it as another act of terror prior to the investigative findings being made public. Clinton's numbers began to fall, and advisors worried about the public's view of the president as soft on issues of national security, thus giving his Republican opponent, Senator Bob Dole, an edge.

Morris explains that he actually polled whether or not Clinton should present himself as a "Peacemaker" or display "Toughness."⁴⁴ Toughness won the day, so Clinton changed his tone, but not his actions. Here is where and why Clinton often comes across to men like George Tenet and Colin Powell as more of a pragmatic, and almost hawkish leader, as opposed to one who was often hesitant to use American force when absolutely necessary; when American interests were directly attacked. He often told people what they wanted to hear, and was damn good at it. Even his critics, such as Robert Patterson, struggled with the idea of coming forward with information painting the president in a negative light, because he talked a great game. But Clinton's attention was elsewhere.

Clinton Senior Aide George Stephanopoulos states that in June 1996, "it felt like the entire herd was converging on the White House."⁴⁵ Stephanopoulos was speaking of Special Prosecutor Kenneth Starr's convictions of Arkansas Governor Jim Guy Tucker and Clinton's partners in the questionable Whitewater land deal, Jim and Susan McDougal. Starr also indicted Bruce Lindsay, an Arkansas banker with ties to Clinton. Another Clinton scandal, known as "Filegate," appeared during this time. In his description of Filegate, Stephanopoulos compares the actions of two White House staffers, hired by First Lady Hillary Clinton and investigated for obtaining the private FBI files of nine hundred Republicans, to Watergate.⁴⁶ The Clinton Administration was in full-on damage control mode. In his article in *National Review*, Byron York claims "Whenever a serious terrorist attack occurred, it seemed Bill Clinton was always

busy with something else.”⁴⁷ It is important to note that Stephanopoulos makes no mention of the attack on the Khobar Towers in his description of this period of time.

Freeh also points out that in Clinton’s autobiography, *My Life*, the president misstates the number of those injured in the attack. Clinton writes that the blast wounded “almost 300.”⁴⁸ Freeh notes that it was actually 372 who were seriously injured. Clinton also confused the Khobar Towers attack with an earlier Al Qaeda assault on a Saudi National Guard building in Riyadh, in which five Americans were killed. The former FBI Director suggests:

He [Clinton] also appears to have somehow conflated the resolution of Khobar with that of an earlier attack on the Saudi National Guard building in Riyadh. ‘Eventually,’ Clinton writes, ‘Saudi Arabia would execute the people it determined to be responsible for the attack.’ Not so. Whether Clinton’s mistakes resulted from speed of composition or indifference to the fate of those killed at Khobar and their survivors, I’m not prepared to say.⁴⁹

Freeh argues that the purpose for Clinton’s disconnection to the Khobar Towers investigation evolved from the administration’s hopes for building a positive relationship with the newly-elected Iranian president, Mohammad Khatami. The FBI Director blames Clinton’s focus on building diplomatic relations with the most infamous state sponsor of terror for the lack of support given towards the Bureau’s efforts. Also, as the years wore on, and no progress had been made in getting the Saudis to cooperate fully with the Khobar Towers investigation, Clinton again became distracted by another domestic scandal: the media’s obsession over his improper relationship with White House intern, Monica Lewinsky.

Freeh repeatedly asked National Security Advisor Sandy Berger to convince the president to approach the Saudi King and persuade him into granting the FBI greater access to detained suspects and Saudi evidence. Each time Clinton returned from a meeting with King Faud or Prince Abdullah, Berger claimed Clinton did not have time to address the issue. Adding greater insult to Freeh, Berger made a public statement about the “seventeen people who had been killed

in the attack.”⁵⁰ This mistake infuriated Freeh. The FBI Director corrected Berger: “Look...there were nineteen people killed, not seventeen.”⁵¹ Freeh states he had nothing against Berger personally, but the National Security Advisor came from the “political side of the Clinton machine.”⁵² He argues that as Deputy National Security Advisor under Anthony Lake, Berger saw every foreign policy issue through the lens of getting Clinton re-elected. According to Freeh, once he was appointed National Security Advisor, Berger only slightly altered his role into one of “preserving Clinton’s legacy and the Democratic hold on the presidency.”⁵³

Freeh’s frustration finally led him to call on former president George H.W. Bush, who used his personal relationship with the Saudi royal family to encourage greater cooperation. The Saudis agreed, and provided the FBI with new evidence, all of which pointed to Iran. When Freeh presented this information, sufficient for several new indictments, Berger demanded to know if anyone else knew about this connection. Referring to Freeh’s evidence of Iranian involvement, Berger called it “hearsay,”⁵⁴ and refused to bring it to Clinton’s attention. It was suppressed. Freeh ended his personal interaction with the case when he handed over his suspect list to President George W. Bush just before he left his post in June 2001. The Bush Administration used the information to generate fourteen indictments against the suspects unveiled by Freeh.

By the time of the Khobar Towers bombing, Bin Laden had already left Sudan, and operated comfortably under the protection of the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, Bin Laden’s time in Sudan is both significant, and controversial. While in its capital city Khartoum, Sudan’s leader, Hassan al-Turabi, aided Bin Laden in building a network of companies to serve as fronts for his worldwide terrorist network.⁵⁵ The Al Qaeda leader operated several successful businesses, and funneled money into the formation of training centers for Muslim jihadists. As

late as 1996, many within the CIA believed Bin Laden to be nothing more than a financier of terror. After his name kept appearing in intelligence traffic beginning in 1993, the agency formed “The Bin Laden Issue Station,” which would later become “Alec Station,” named after the son of the unit’s first leader, Michael Scheuer.⁵⁶ Operating under the CIA’s CTC, its initial purpose was to investigate terrorist financial links. But Alec Station eventually became the primary entity for gathering intel on Bin Laden and recommending action against the terrorist and his network.⁵⁷ As they delved deeper into his connections and influence, they learned he was more than just a wealthy Saudi who despised the West. In Tenet’s words, Bin Laden “was an engine of pure evil.”⁵⁸

Bin Laden’s time in Sudan is dubious particularly due to one post-9/11 accusation made by a Pakistani-American businessman and millionaire Democratic donor, Mansoor Ijaz. According to Ijaz, Clinton and his national security team ignored several opportunities to capture Bin Laden while he was in Sudan. Ijaz claims that he negotiated more than one of these offerings through back channels, meeting with officials in both the US and Sudan, including National Security Advisor Samuel “Sandy” Berger, the State Department’s Susan Rice, Sudan’s President Omar Hassan Ahmed Bashir, and the Sudanese Chief of Intelligence. Ijaz’s reasoning for Bashir’s willingness to hand over Bin Laden, along with lengthy intelligence about the networks he constructed, was the suffering caused by sanctions against Sudan.⁵⁹ Bashir wanted them lifted.

Ijaz notes that two of the 9/11 hijackers were among those listed in the networks. He then asserts, “The silence of the Clinton administration in responding to these offers was deafening.”⁶⁰ According to Ijaz, Rice in particular, then working as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, was a major obstacle to the facilitation of the deal for Sudanese intelligence

on Bin Laden. She lobbied for placing a ban on US government employees, including members of the CIA and FBI, from meeting with Sudanese officials. Although Sudan was taken over by an Islamist regime in the late 1980s, by the mid-1990s, the Sudanese government implemented a more conciliatory approach to US relations, and wanted to re-establish a healthy diplomatic rapport. Rice argued against any relaxation in the US stance towards Khartoum.

Ijaz maintains that the counterterrorism policies of Clinton and Berger “fueled the rise of Bin Laden from an ordinary man to a Hydra-like monster.”⁶¹ As Bashir began noticing enormous problems associated with his country’s hosting of the terror leader, the Sudanese sent intelligence officials to the US in February 1996. Sudan offered to either arrest and extradite him to Saudi Arabia, or monitor his activities and associates. Bashir feared Bin Laden would use his considerable influence to try to overthrow him. Instead of accepting the Sudanese offer, the US put pressure on Sudan to expel him. In May 1996, Bin Laden voluntarily left Sudan for Afghanistan. Former CIA Director Tenet remains unaware of any Sudanese offer to extradite Bin Laden, but he does admit that the terrorist’s relocation at first made things more difficult. Afghanistan was in the midst of chaotic infighting, which would soon leave the country in the hands of the Taliban, “a brutal, backward band of fanatics.”⁶² Bin Laden found a home with radical cleric and Taliban leader Mullah Omar, and heightened the level of his sinister activities. Tenet explains, “for the first time in history, we had something that was not ‘state-sponsored terrorism,’ but rather a state sponsored by a terrorist group.”⁶³

Bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan with his second in command, Zawahiri, and other collaborators, including Wadih El-Hage, currently serving a life sentence in the US for his role in the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, which were in the planning stages during this time. Ijaz’s accusations against the Clinton Administration are absent any official

verification, with the exception of Tim Carney, who served as US Ambassador to Sudan in the mid-1990s, and allegedly worked with Ijaz on the multiple offers. As noted, the CIA was unaware of any such deal presented by Sudanese officials. But due to the secret level upon which the talks supposedly took place, along with the lack of any significant CIA relationship with Clinton prior to Tenet's tenure, the allegations should not be completely dismissed. In most government circles, Ijaz, though almost universally well-liked, is considered either a heroic whistle-blower, or "an attention-craving Walter Mitty type, prone to exaggerating his importance."⁶⁴ However, with so many foreign policy documents from the Clinton era still classified, and given Sandy Berger's 2005 conviction for removing classified materials from the National Archives just prior to his testimony before the 9/11 Commission, Ijaz's account deserves further investigation.

In February 1998, Bin Laden and Zawahiri issued a public "fatwa" in the name of a "World Islamic Front" to be published in an Arabic newspaper in London.⁶⁵ The fatwa "called for the murder of any American, anywhere on earth, as the 'individual duty' for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it."⁶⁶ Months later, Bin Laden sat for an interview with ABC News reporter John Miller, in which he echoed many of the same themes, and issued similar threats. One notable aspect of the interview is Bin Laden's ridicule of the United Nations. In an attempt to shame the organization for its treatment of Palestine, which is ironic in today's climate, Bin Laden stated:

The strange thing is that any act on their [the Palestinians] part to avenge themselves or to lift the injustice befalling them causes great agitation in the United Nations, which hastens to call for an emergency meeting only to convict the victim and to censure the wronged and the tyrannized, whose children have been killed and whose crops have been destroyed and whose farms have been pulverized.⁶⁷

In his justification for Palestinian terror attacks, and anti-Israeli, anti-Western violence, Bin Laden showcased his intent. Bin Laden points to the bombings in Riyadh, as well as the attack on the Khobar Towers, as a signal to governments (i.e. the US), which “willingly participate in the aggression against our countries and our lives and our sacrosanct symbols.”⁶⁸ Nearly three months later, Bin Laden solidified his capabilities when Al Qaeda attacked the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. It was time to take him seriously.

The most devastating attacks against Americans abroad in the period leading up to 9/11 occurred in Africa. In August 1998, Al Qaeda orchestrated the near-simultaneous truck bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The blasts killed more than 200 people, mostly Africans, and injured more than 5,000 others. The attacks were carried out by the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, who had ties to Al Qaeda and received funds from Bin Laden. Twelve Americans were killed in Nairobi, including two CIA agents. The embassy attacks occurred on August 7, likely due to the eighth anniversary of American soldiers landing in Saudi Arabia in preparation for the Gulf War. The following day, CIA Director Tenet held a meeting where he distributed intelligence to senior officials on an expected gathering of Al Qaeda leaders, including Bin Laden, at an Afghan camp to plan future attacks.⁶⁹ The meeting’s attendees agreed on military air strikes, which would include the use of Tomahawk Cruise Missiles aimed at the terrorist congregation in Afghanistan. Missiles would also target the al Shifa plant, a pharmaceutical facility in Khartoum, which was believed to contain nerve gas.

With regard to any preventative action which may have been taken over the decade prior to 9/11, Afghanistan was the key. The presence of the terror training camps was known to the

CIA and other intelligence agencies as far back as 1992. Clinton admits that in 1996, under pressure from his administration and the CIA, Sudan expelled Bin Laden. Clinton states:

We asked Saudi Arabia to take him. The Saudis didn't want him back, but Bin Laden finally left Sudan in mid-1996...He moved to Afghanistan, where he found a warm welcome from Mullah Omar, leader of the Taliban, a militant Sunni sect that was bent on establishing a radical Muslim theocracy in Afghanistan.”⁷⁰

Clinton then describes the aftermath of the 1998 African embassy bombings. Just one week after the attacks, both the CIA and FBI confirmed Al Qaeda's responsibility. He recalls receiving CIA intelligence reports from Tenet that Bin Laden and his senior leaders were planning to meet at one of the Afghani camps on August 20, which would give Americans the opportunity to retaliate.

But the administration dithered over Pakistan, which would become a returning theme both before and after 9/11. Because the ISI used some of the Al Qaeda training camps, the chance that Pakistanis could be included in the damage was high. Clinton believed Pakistan would assume the attack came from India. With India and Pakistan each in possession of nuclear weapons, he feared the worst. Conversely, if the US military warned Pakistan of its planned strikes, certain sympathetic members of the ISI would undoubtedly warn the Taliban, and thus, Al Qaeda.⁷¹ Still, Clinton agreed to send the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Joe Ralston, to inform the Pakistani military commander of impending US strikes. Even though General Ralston was to do so minutes prior to the missiles crossing over Pakistani air space, the mission was risky. It would only take minutes for Bin Laden and other Al Qaeda operatives to evacuate their locations. But as stated by Clinton in the same breath, “My team was worried about one other thing: my testimony before the grand jury in three days, on August 17.”⁷² Here, the president referred to his subpoena to testify about his purportedly false answers during the

Paula Jones deposition, and whether or not he convinced Monica Lewinsky, who by this time had immunity from prosecution, to lie under oath.

In response to the embassy bombings, Clinton reacted somewhat differently than he had towards past attacks. In July of 1997, Clinton chose Tenet to take over as DCI for the CIA. Tenet, incredibly affable, built a strong working relationship with the president, which somewhat altered Clinton's viewpoint of Al Qaeda and how to disrupt the network. Therefore, in retaliation for the embassy attacks, Clinton launched Operation Infinite Reach, which served as the code name for the air strikes against Bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan and the suspected chemical weapons plant in Sudan. The UN Security Council also passed Resolution 1189, which condemned the embassy bombings and included a call for "international cooperation between States in order to adopt practical and effective measures to prevent, combat and eliminate all forms of terrorism affecting the international community."⁷³

On August 20, the US Navy launched the strikes from the Arabian Sea. Most of the missiles hit their targets in Khost, Afghanistan, but no terrorists were killed. The al Shifa plant in Sudan was destroyed, but no evidence of chemical weapons or harmful gases were found. Clinton was thus accused of orchestrating an attack against an aspirin factory in Sudan, and launching Tomahawk missiles into desert sand in Afghanistan. Given the ineffectiveness of the retaliatory strikes, critics assumed Clinton approved the military response solely to draw attention away from his personal problems involving the nation's most famous intern. Comparisons to a popular 1997 movie, *Wag the Dog*, in which a president fakes a war to distract the public from his involvement in a domestic scandal, spread wildly. The timing was indeed suspicious, but the case for the strikes, made in the interest of national security, were sound, even if they were carried out with little effect.⁷⁴

Though Clinton's motives were not entirely apolitical, he ordered the military action in the immediate aftermath of the embassy bombings. What he did not do was rally the American public, sell a continued assault on the training camps in Afghanistan, and organize a prolonged attack on the sanctuary provided to Bin Laden by the Taliban. Clinton does not address the charges of disinterest he and others in his administration are accused of displaying when it came to taking any serious military action beyond this point. But many critics speculate that the accusations regarding his possible manipulation of military action to gain protective cover for the Lewinsky scandal hindered him from taking further aggressive measures against Taliban-protected Al Qaeda strongholds after Operation Infinite Reach.

In November 1998, the FBI was able to secure another indictment against Bin Laden. The Bureau charged him, his military commander, Muhammad Atef, and several others with the African embassy bombings. Five months later, Bin Laden finally made it onto the FBI's Top Ten Most Wanted List. Freeh notes, "Arrest warrants were flying around the globe for him."⁷⁵ But the FBI Director also admits that by the fall of 1998, "I had been Bill Clinton's top cop for half a decade, and he hadn't spoken to me in two years."⁷⁶ Even though Clinton retaliated with military air strikes, and the CIA took control of the hunt for Bin Laden, mostly as a result of more resources being moved to the CTC and Alec Station, the FBI still acted as the justice arm. When Freeh presented Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf with arrest warrants for Bin Laden, Musharraf laughed and told him, "You're probably the only person on earth who could serve these warrants right now."⁷⁷ The Pakistani's reaction to the American law enforcement officer was indicative of a wider problem. Not only did the FBI not have the resources or power to successfully implement a global manhunt; Bin Laden was fighting a war. A fanatic willing to die for a cause is not concerned with being arrested and granted an attorney and fair trial.

Unsurprisingly, Musharraf refused to help. Musharraf disingenuously informed Freeh that Taliban leader Mullah Omar had given his personal assurances that Osama Bin Laden was innocent of the East Africa bombings and had abandoned terrorism. It is no coincidence that Bin Laden was finally killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan, where he was safely guarded by Pakistani officials for years. Freeh notes that with the protection provided by many senior officials in Pakistan, “Osama Bin Laden was snug as a bug in a rug.”⁷⁸ So, why not put sanctions on Pakistan? Why not threaten to withhold financial aid? Freeh decries the situation as severely lacking with regards to presidential authority and US power:

I had been the one who had gone to Pakistan in 2000 to ask for Pervez Musharraf’s help in capturing Osama bin Laden because, before September 11, 2001, bin Laden was a law-enforcement issue...If our government had a different mind-set, the secretaries of state and defense would have been in Lahore with me, or instead of me. Or perhaps Sandy Berger. But that wasn’t the case.”⁷⁹

The Clinton Administration did not force Musharraf’s hand in any way. The CIA also understood Pakistan’s role in protecting Bin Laden, and communicated this fact in the Presidential Daily Briefings. But Clinton remained focused on the tenuous conflict between Pakistan and India, who each conducted nuclear weapons testing in 1998 and 1999. He was unwilling to make any moves against Pakistan for this reason.

The Al Qaeda attack that provided the intelligence community with the strongest evidence of a pending strike on the homeland was the bombing of the USS *Cole* in October 2000. A previously planned strike against the USS *The Sullivans* in January failed. The terrorists placed too much weight on their small vessel, and could not carry out their plans. The attack on the USS *Cole* in Aden, Yemen, however, succeeded, killing seventeen American Navy sailors, and wounding 39 others. Clinton immediately denounced the bombing as despicable and cowardly, but his concern at the time was placed on the Camp David Summit. For most of his

presidency, Clinton was determined to broker a peace deal between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and he worried that any attempts at retaliation for the attack on the *Cole* could disrupt the negotiations between the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Some even believe he did not want to do anything to harm Vice-President Al Gore's chances in the 2000 election.⁸⁰ However, Clinton had evidence of a sustained pattern of Al Qaeda attacks, and given his gift of effective communication and persuasion, he could have easily sold strong military action against the perpetrators of the *Cole* bombing, and those who protected them, to both the American public and the international community. Once again, Clinton had the opportunity to disrupt the Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan, and he balked. The Camp David Summit in 2000 also ended in failure due to Arafat's predictable entrenchment.

Clinton had multiple chances to be proactive against Al Qaeda by targeting the organization's numerous training camps. Again, the most persuasive argument for Clinton's lack of a consequential strategy for Al Qaeda was his unwillingness to follow the CIA into Afghanistan, and provide the Agency with sufficient military support. Perhaps his historical reference to the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan prevented him from taking action against the terrorist sanctuaries littering the barren country. The CIA had concrete evidence that Bin Laden was being protected by the Taliban. Its agents spent time building relationships with the Northern Alliance, who participated in the fight against the Soviets and also fought the Taliban for control of Afghanistan. The CIA worked primarily with Ahmed Shah Massoud, the leader of the Northern Alliance, who orchestrated meetings between the Americans and tribal leaders opposed to Taliban rule. In an act that illuminates the effectiveness of the CIA alliance with Massoud, two days before 9/11, two Tunisian Al Qaeda members posing as journalists

assassinated the Northern Alliance leader. Bin Laden ordered the murder to ensure his continued protection by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Tenet's description of the CIA's focus on Afghanistan and the Agency's work with assets on the ground in country can be found in numerous public speeches, recorded testimonies, and within his memoir, *At the Center of the Storm*. According to the former CIA Director, when Clinton appointed him to the position of DCI, the CIA suffered from a severe lack of resources, particularly in the area of qualified personnel. Global technological innovation marched forward at an incredible pace, and analysts were unable to keep up. Tenet describes HUMINT as being in a state of total disarray, and therefore, notes that the CIA's ability to "recruit, train, and sustain officers for our clandestine services" suffered greatly.⁸¹ He contends that the decline in funding after the Cold War hindered the Agency's effectiveness at a time when a strengthened intelligence apparatus grew increasingly vital to the security of the nation and its interests. For this reason, he set out to rebuild. By 1999, one specific area of concentration in the fight against Al Qaeda in particular began to yield beneficial results. Known as "The Plan," the CIA's CTC developed a strategy "to track—and then act against—Bin Ladin and his associates in terrorist sanctuaries" in Afghanistan.⁸²

The strategy was a good one, but it ran into several obstacles. The US government had no official presence in the region, and challenging the Taliban regime was absent from any foreign policy initiatives or diplomatic maneuvering. The strained relationship with Pakistan due to the country's nuclear testing in 1998 and military coup in 1999 also played a huge role in handcuffing the Agency in Afghanistan. Even so, the CIA was able to grow HUMINT sources by fifty percent between 1999 and 9/11.⁸³ By the time of the attacks in New York and Washington, the collection programs and human networks put in place by the CTC nearly

covered Afghanistan. This build-up of sources was key to a greater understanding of the terrorist network, and most importantly, allowed the CIA to confirm the existence of numerous Al Qaeda facilities and training camps across the country. Given these improvements, and the actionable intelligence they often yielded, aggressive, targeted strikes against these terrorist strongholds could have disrupted the planning and efficiency of those who were at war with the US, particularly after the bombing of the USS *Cole*. It is impossible to say if enhanced military action against these camps would have prevented 9/11. However, as presented under oath by Tenet, “The terrorist plotting, planning, recruiting, and training that Bin Laden and al-Qaida did in the late 1990s were aided immeasurably by the sanctuary the Taliban provided.”⁸⁴

Clinton had many obvious reasons for striking the terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan. He was well aware of most of them, but like everyone else, he was also ignorant of others, which would only become clear after September 11th. The “muscle hijackers,” or the operatives responsible for storming the cockpits and controlling passengers on 9/11, were chosen by Bin Laden and other senior Al Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan during the summer of 2000.⁸⁵ Under detention, KSM claimed the hijackers were mostly Saudi due to their overwhelming presence in the training camps. Other interrogated detainees suggested the Saudis were chosen to send a message to Saudi Arabia about its relationship with the US. The 9/11 Commission found that Saudi and Yemeni trainees in Afghanistan were the most willing to volunteer for suicide operations.⁸⁶ After acquiring US visas in Saudi Arabia, the muscle hijackers trained in Afghanistan in late 2000 and into early 2001.⁸⁷ Again, the president, along with the rest of the world, could not foresee the magnitude of savagery that these sanctuaries would ultimately produce. But this acknowledgment does not mean Clinton is excused from recognizing that a deadly threat to US interests found solace and protection in this region. Though Clinton

supported Tenet, and eventually advocated for increased intelligence funding, he ultimately declined to take any significant offensive action in Afghanistan. According to Henry Crumpton, who served as head of operations for the CTC during the Clinton Administration, “The most important, most immediate objective was Afghanistan.”⁸⁸ But even after both the embassy bombings and the attack on the USS *Cole*, “AQ (Al Qaeda) in Afghanistan remained unscathed, untouched.”⁸⁹

Richard Clarke, who served as Clinton’s National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, said in a 2002 interview with PBS’s *Frontline*, that by the time of the 1998 African embassy attacks, “everyone in the Clinton Cabinet would have said that Al Qaeda is a serious threat.”⁹⁰ But Clarke, often criticized as a Clinton apologist, states that had 9/11 not occurred, Americans would view any significant action taken against Bin Laden as an “overreaction.”⁹¹ He goes on to imagine a world without the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Instead of the American public asking “How could they miss it?”, Clarke alleges it would instead wonder, “Why were they so preoccupied with bin Laden?”⁹² But 9/11 did happen. It is therefore reasonable to analyze the lack of response to such attacks, especially given Clarke’s statement professing his own supposed “preoccupation” with Bin Laden.

Clarke was forced to admit his overstatement regarding the Clinton Administration’s activities against Bin Laden, which he describes as “massive.”⁹³ When asked if the Lewinsky Scandal hindered attempts by the CIA, NSA, FBI, or other counterterrorism entities to take more aggressive steps, Clarke replied that Clinton never refused him. But almost immediately, Clarke was asked, “But didn’t you push for military action after the *Cole*?”⁹⁴ He suggested the attacks on the USS *Cole*, one year before 9/11, were an exception.

Clarke's only criticism of the Clinton Administration appears to be unintentional. But what he reveals illuminates the most consequential action the president could have taken. Clarke notes:

I believe that, had we destroyed the terrorist training camps in Afghanistan earlier, that the conveyor belt that was producing terrorists sending them out around the world would have been destroyed. So many, many trained and indoctrinated Al Qaeda terrorists, which now we have to hunt down country by country, many of them would not be trained and would not be indoctrinated, because there wouldn't have been a safe place to do it if we had destroyed the camps earlier.⁹⁵

Clarke hesitates to describe this lack of action as a mistake by Clinton and his national security team. He references Clinton's role in the Arab-Israeli peace process at the time, as well as US-led NATO actions in Kosovo. But he still admits how vital the Afghan training camps were to the successful implementation of the 9/11 attacks. When asked what was the one thing he wished he would have done, he answered:

Blow up the camps and take out their sanctuary. Eliminate their safe haven. They would have been a hell of a lot less capable of recruiting people. Their whole 'Come to Afghanistan where you'll be safe and you'll be trained,' well, that wouldn't have worked if every time they got a camp together, it was blown up by the United States. That's the one thing that we recommended that didn't happen — the one thing in retrospect I wish had happened.⁹⁶

But these measures were never taken. In an ironic twist, one day prior to September 11, 2001, Clinton attempted to justify his decision against taking military action in Afghanistan. Speaking to a pre-9/11 audience of Australian businessmen, with a self-righteous justification for his decision-making, Clinton said, "I could have killed Bin Laden, but I would have to destroy a little town called Kandahar...and kill 300 innocent women and children."⁹⁷ Clinton, at this time out of office for months, claimed, "I nearly got him once."⁹⁸ These statements gained considerable attention just one day later. They also garnered much scrutiny. Clinton actually had other opportunities to take out the Al Qaeda leader. He just did not take them.

In a *48 Hours* special featuring interviews with the twelve living CIA directors, as well as some agents and analysts, one specific account of Clinton's unwillingness to take out Bin Laden is given. In "The Spymasters: CIA in the Crosshairs," Tenet, along with legendary CIA operative and one-time director of the CTC, Cofer Black, describes an incident that occurred when the Agency was testing drones, then unarmed, over Afghanistan. As noted, by this time, the CIA had built a significant presence in the chaotic tribal nation, and won over many villagers in their fight against the Taliban. Agents developed assets on the ground, many who were members of the Northern Alliance, and worked with the CIA on several plans to capture Bin Laden as part of The Plan. But many of these operations were discarded once they reached the highest levels of the government, primarily due to a fear that Bin Laden would be assassinated, or the civilians with whom he surrounded himself would become collateral damage. In 1998, the group at Alec Station devised an operation designed to grab Bin Laden as he exited a compound in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The proposed mission included US Special Forces, FBI agents, and Afghani local fighters. FBI Director Freeh describes his frustration with the continued resistance to take advantage of the CIA's developing network in Afghanistan: "The scheme worked its way up the chain of command until it was finally killed by the military, which owned the assets that were to have been used."⁹⁹

On September 28, 2000, when the drone testing took place, Tenet states: "We saw a very tall man in white robes who we assumed...was bin Laden."¹⁰⁰ The CIA contacted its Afghani assets in the area, who confirmed his location, and the mission was set to proceed. Black then sarcastically notes, "I mean—I love this. This is such a Washington thing. Our instructions were to capture him. And that's what we—attempted to do."¹⁰¹ Black obviously preferred another option: killing him. But according to Tenet, "Killing bin Laden in that time period we

operated was never an option. Because the Attorney General [Reno] made it abundantly clear that he could only be killed in the context of a capture operation.”¹⁰² Both Tenet and Black understood their Afghan allies were not playing by the same rules that confined them, but the CIA had to answer to the president of the United States. Black adds, “The Clinton Administration spent eight years learning to appreciate this threat. And only at the very end did they get it.”¹⁰³ Tenet abided by the instructions given to him by the White House, and the action was scrapped. Black then offers his assessment of future Al Qaeda preparations: “There was no doubt in my mind that the United States was going to be struck and struck hard. Lots of Americans were going to die.”¹⁰⁴

This repeated course of solid intelligence gathering, mission preparation, and high-level government obstruction became the norm until 9/11. After the September 11 attacks, Bush granted Tenet’s request to lead the invasion of Afghanistan in October. The new president told the director he could have anything he needed. With a solid network of Afghan allies, and backed by the military prowess of US Special Forces, the CIA led the large-scale operation that finally devastated Al Qaeda strongholds and training facilities in the war-torn country. Unfortunately, Bin Laden, with the aid of sympathetic Pakistanis, was able to escape across the border into Pakistan. But his sanctuary was destroyed...at least temporarily. Years later, the Taliban would regroup, and the war in Afghanistan heightened. Members of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) are now known to utilize the tunnels and caves that once protected Bin Laden and his associates. In the spring of 2017, the Trump Administration launched an effective attack on one of these underground systems, killing over 100 ISIS members in the process.

Freeh describes his service within the Clinton Administration as incredibly frustrating when it came to dismantling Al Qaeda, or at least proportionately responding to their

increasingly destructive attacks. He states, “I’d seen the evidence of the ongoing war with my own eyes...in East Africa, on the USS *Cole*...But until 9/11, we lacked the political leadership and more important the political will to do what had to be done.”¹⁰⁵ The most glaring problems facing the Clinton White House, affecting both its willingness and ability to respond to this rising threat, and the attacks that foreshadowed something more ominous, were political calculations over the use of military action, and the plethora of scandals being juggled by the president’s staff during both of his terms. Perhaps it is why investigative journalist Richard Minter described Osama Bin Laden as “the unfinished business of the Clinton Administration.”¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the deadly terrorist would inherit the same designation over the course of the George W. Bush presidency. The extensive dedication and painstaking work of the nation’s intelligence agencies over the course of almost two decades, in concert with the impeccable training, bravery, and competence of the US Navy Seals, finally culminated in Bin Laden’s long-awaited demise during the Obama presidency.

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Chapter 8. EPILOGUE

Americans are often given a false choice between the rigid foreign policy options of Realpolitik, a version of pragmatic political and diplomatic realism, or an idealistic concept of humanitarian intervention and multilateral cooperation. The choice is too often presented as one or the other. Realpolitik is often viewed as the selfish pursuit of national interests, with little concern for principles or moral doctrine. It is most notably associated with Henry Kissinger, who, as Nixon's Secretary of State, opened relations with China during the Cold War despite the Asian nation's adherence to communism. Kissinger acted pragmatically, but many viewed his form of diplomacy as legitimizing an enemy state with an atrocious record of human rights abuses.

Conversely, President Jimmy Carter concentrated on a more humanitarian approach to world affairs, and with the exception of the Camp David Accords, left a foreign policy legacy construed as weak and ineffective. In the face of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian Hostage Crisis, Carter used the carrot instead of the stick far too often, and America lost much of its credibility with regards to military strength and resolute foreign intervention.

President Bill Clinton does not fit into either of these categories. As noted within this study, Clinton initially pursued an "internationalist vision"¹ for US foreign policy. His goal was to blend "idealism and pragmatism, internationalism and protectionism, [and] use of force and reliance on multinational institutions."² As a result, he was criticized for attempting to be all things to all people. The Clinton national security team during his first term put forth the ideas of democratic enlargement and aggressive multilateralism to serve as the foundation upon which to build a cohesive foreign policy. The focus was always economics, both foreign and domestic. The president's intense concentration on rebuilding American economic strength often

supplanted the need for attention elsewhere, as international conflicts spiraled out of control in various regions. Due to the post-Cold War nature of these crises, the notion of spreading American ideals of free market democracy, trade, and human rights protections often proved inadequate, particularly when the US refrained from fully committing to the goals the administration itself proposed.

For this reason, Clinton's hopes of greater cooperation with the international community via the United Nations, as well as the pursuit of collective security among democratic nations, were not realized, particularly during his first term. The problem was not the intent. It was the execution. Diplomacy should always be the first consideration when confronting foreign instability, but it often leads nowhere without the credible determination to use force if necessary. Clinton shifted the burden of decision-making over foreign entanglements to the UN, and quickly learned of the organization's shortcomings, especially when American military forces were involved. Speaking of the UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia, Clinton states:

After Black Hawk Down, whenever I approved the deployment of forces, I knew much more about what the risks were, and made much clearer what operations had to be approved in Washington. The lessons of Somalia were not lost on the military planners who plotted our course in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and other troubled spots of the post-Cold War world, where America was often asked to step in to stop hideous violence, and too often expected to do it without the loss of lives to ourselves, our adversaries, or innocent bystanders. The challenge of dealing with complicated problems like Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia inspired one of [National Security Advisor] Tony Lake's best lines: 'Sometimes I really miss the Cold War.'³

Clinton admits the effort to seize Aideed was misguided; he should never have allowed it to replace the original mission of peacekeeping and protecting and providing humanitarian aid. The decision to leave Somalia after the Battle of Mogadishu had a lasting legacy on future decisions over the use of military force, as well as on the emboldening of Al Qaeda. The first signs of Clinton's move away from his dependence on UN multilateral peacekeeping appeared on

October 7, 1993, following the tragedy in Somalia, when he stated: “We have obligations elsewhere...It is not America’s job to ‘rebuild Somalia society.’”⁴ Here, Clinton repudiated his own administration’s faith in UN Security Resolutions, and rejected some of the policies proposed during his campaign. But Clinton did not only suffer from his inexperience. He was a quick study. Political calculations, as well as a tenure bogged down by numerous scandals, also inhibited the president’s attention to foreign affairs, thus hindering his ability to react effectively.

In 1997, historian Richard Haas noted the difficulties in defining Clinton’s foreign policy. In his article, “Fatal Distraction,” Haas points to the inconsistencies derived from the Clinton Administration’s concept of democratic enlargement as a key to maintaining global order. National Security Advisor Tony Lake put forth this element in a 1993 speech, which proposed that the “successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of...enlargement of the world’s free community of market democracies.”⁵ The idea behind using economic, political, and social progress as a tool to lure unstable regions into compliance on the world’s stage lacked a basic understanding of why certain foreign entanglements erupt. As stated by Haas, “Enlarging the community of democracies might look good on paper,”⁶ but it is far too idealistic and ineffective when faced with actors whose motives are far more complicated. It did not serve the administration well when dealing with urgent crises, such as those in Bosnia, Rwanda, or Somalia, all of which grew out of historic ethnic turmoil. The Clinton team suffered from their inability to separate “theory and practice,”⁷ until events caused them to give up the theory entirely. The national security apparatus under Clinton was forced to act in a “whack-a-mole” fashion, consistently trying to pound out one problem as another quickly arose.

One of the main problems with Clinton’s approach is one mimicked by many other leaders. American intervention, particularly if it involves military deployment, remains steeped

in controversy. Proactive intervention is even more contentious. Often, the US steps into a conflict under a cloud of domestic suspicion, which is the unfortunate byproduct of the legacy of Vietnam, and now, Iraq. Clinton was not going to sacrifice his vast agenda for problem-solving at home to the chaos of foreign affairs, especially without an obvious national security interest to consider. So, he did not take the steps to block escalation where he could. Clinton often acted to subdue international acts of violence just enough to keep it off of the front pages. In Bosnia, “lift and strike,” if pressed vigorously, might have precipitated a political settlement and avoided the mass murder that engulfed the Balkan region. In Somalia, there was nothing intrinsically wrong in nation-building; some sort of political solution was implied in the original intervention. However, it was arrogant to believe that nation-building could be accomplished within a few months in a land as ravished and divided as Somalia. Returning the legitimate president to power in Haiti was also a worthy objective, but it required a consistent follow-up from Washington, which was never organized once the troop landings redeemed Clintons reputation.⁸

The military’s mission in Somalia evolved from one of humanitarian intervention to one of nation-building. The same can be said of Haiti. Both failed. Somalia slipped even further into chaos, and the attempts at securing democracy in Haiti, largely abandoned, have only exacerbated the country’s problems in terms of poverty, illiteracy, disease, and violence. Rwanda’s problems spread out to neighboring countries, the most notable being the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire. The flood of refugees from the genocidal region caused another outbreak of similar violence and brutality in the Congo, with famine and the spread of disease complicating its political and social balance.

Ironically, for an administration whose key participants viewed US military intervention with skepticism, the Clinton team deployed American forces on multiple occasions. The

frequency of deployments, as well as their almost overlapping missions, caused great distress among soldiers and military leaders alike. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Patterson notes with irony that he and his fellow soldiers “were involved in more operations during the supposed ‘peace dividend’ and ‘down-sizing’ of the military under President Clinton than during the Cold War years of military buildup and improvement under Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush.”⁹

With the possible exception of Bosnia, which is viewed as a tepid foreign policy success due to late entry, the powerful American military felt disillusioned. They were not being utilized correctly. Whether one is speaking of timing, or defining the objective of a particular mission, US forces often felt they either did not arrive early enough, or they were not allowed to make a real difference. Timing mattered in Bosnia. The US-led NATO force achieved its military goals with precision, but only after the Clinton Administration and its European allies allowed hundreds of thousands to perish while each attempting to pass the buck to the other.

Rwanda provides an upsetting illustration of sending in American troops when nothing of note is left to do. According to scholar Michael Hughes, “The problem of political will remains one of the most important challenges impeding significant, early action and the prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity.”¹⁰ Haiti also gives an example of an unclear, or unreachable, objective. The overwhelming force sent to remove the ruling military junta and restore President Aristide ended up serving as yet another peacekeeping mission. Democracy in some form was restored for a time, but corruption, violence, and poverty still plague the country. Once critic suggests that in trying to find his way through Bosnia and Somalia, Clinton, whose interest “lagged at the water’s edge,” became a “slave to public and congressional opinion when he lacks his own bearings.”¹¹

In a rather prophetic article written just three days prior to the Battle of Mogadishu, George Kennan, the man behind the Cold-War era containment policy, wrote an editorial in *The New York Times*. Speaking of US intervention in Somalia, Kennan notes:

The fact is that this dreadful situation cannot possibly be put to rights other than by the establishment of a governing power for the entire territory, and a very ruthless, determined one at that. It could not be a democratic one, because the very prerequisites for a democratic political system do not exist among the people in question. Our action hold no promise of correcting this situation.¹²

Kennan's thoughts on Somalia raise an interesting question regarding the use of American military power, and even its support of humanitarian missions that fail due to a lack of any stable institutions in a particular region. When one examines US presence in places such as Yemen, Libya, or Sudan, these questions should be considered.

It is not realistic to close American doors to all, and remove US power, both physical and financial, from institutions that intervene in places under intense strife. However, the fundamental problem confronting American leaders is when and where to do so, and how. Of course, national security interests continue to outweigh humanitarian ones. For this reason, US forces remain on the ground, though in lesser numbers, across the Middle East in an attempt to fight terrorism abroad rather than at home. But the entire region has devolved further into chaos.

After the Arab Spring, where revolutions against leaders throughout nations such as Libya, Egypt, and Syria took place, President Barack Obama sang the praises of what he deemed to be a unified people's peaceful removal of autocracy in favor of democracy. However, these uprisings ultimately led to the ousting of a long-term US ally in Egypt, and ushered in political and social instability across the region. Hosni Mubarak had his problems, and his militaristic regime had an imperfect record on human rights. But prior to his forced abdication, Egypt was one of the most stable, successful, and powerful nations in Africa. After the election of the

Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammad Morsi, the promise of democracy and freedom turned into nothing more than an attempt to install a theocracy, such as that which exists in Iran. Morsi was forcibly removed by a military coup shortly after his real motives became clear, and General Abdel Fattah el Sisi took his place. Stability has returned, and US relations with Egypt have improved. However, Libya and Syria are in complete disarray. Syria has been mired in civil war for almost six years, and hundreds of thousands of people are either dead or existing as refugees. Libya is being overrun by Islamic extremists. The UN has little effective presence in the region, and Americans, for the most part, have stood by and watched the carnage unfold in the wake of the country's retreat from Iraq. Crises in the Middle East are again demanding an answer to the question of intervention, whether due to humanitarian concerns, military objectives, or both. Africa, too, demands international attention. With terror groups, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Shabaab in Somalia, kidnapping and enslaving locals, and disease, famine, and violence devastating regions across the continent, the global community is looking for leadership. If and how America responds has yet to be determined.

When Richard Holbrooke visited Bosnia as a board member of the International Rescue Committee, America's largest nongovernmental relief organization, he recorded images of the ethnic cleansing committed by the Serbs, "filming house upon house that had been blown up by the Serb soldiers and militia."¹³ He recoiled when watching Muslims exchanging deeds to their homes for safe passage out of Bosnia. He was disgusted by tales from refugees who described the disappearance of thousands of Muslim men. In an article for *Newsweek*, upon his return, Holbrooke asked "What would the West be doing now if the religious convictions of combatants were reversed, and a Muslim force was now trying to destroy two million beleaguered Christians and/ or Jews?"¹⁴ Unfortunately, Americans no longer wonder about the answer to this question.

The weak international response to the systematic execution and displacement of millions at the hands of the Islamic State shows what occurs with an absence of US leadership, even when international humanitarian aid is deployed. Since their rise in 2011, ISIS has brutally tortured, raped, and killed tens of thousands of Christians, Yazidis, and moderate Muslims in a campaign to terrorize regions in Iraq and Syria into submission. The Obama Administration offered some verbal denunciations, but mostly stayed out of the situation, with the exception of very limited air strikes. ISIS members were able to carry out their swift takeover by hijacking millions of dollars' worth of US military equipment from Iraqi soldiers, who abandoned their posts when faced with defending their homes and people. The terrorists were also able to travel without harassment along long, lone roads, from city to city, free to pursue their bloodthirsty aims. They continue to terrorize the few Christians who remain in these regions, subjecting them to such brutal acts as burning them alive in cages and crucifixion. They have done the same to Iraq's Yazidi Kurds, who have experienced unbelievable persecution.¹⁵ Thousands of Yazidi women and young girls have been kidnapped by ISIS members and forced into sex slavery.

It remains to be seen whether future American leaders can accomplish what President Clinton could not, and find the middle ground between realism and idealism in foreign policy. It will be up to the United States to put a halt to these gross violations of human rights. But, after Iraq, do Americans have the will? Do they have the resolve? The American public has almost resigned itself to the realization that the US is "damned if we do, damned if we don't." For this reason, several countries in the Middle East, and many rogue states in Africa, are almost uninhabitable. Countries such as Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Yemen, and Syria are in chaos. Most lack any sort of central authority, and if they do, as in Syria, it is backed up by an adversary, who, if confronted, could initiate widespread global conflict. Hardened diplomacy backed by

smart and well-defined military action is the only way to stop the primary aggressors currently wreaking havoc on the world stage. It will take cunning and persuasive American leadership to do it.

Endnotes

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Jennifer Perrett Galiouras is a New Orleans' native who currently resides in Covington, Louisiana with her husband Jules, her two-year-old daughter Lyla, and Miss Lillie, the family's Golden Retriever. In 2000, she graduated from Louisiana State University with a B.A. in Mass Communications, and embarked on a six-year career in media and advertising sales in New Orleans. After enjoying herself immensely within the Crescent City's professional, and social, atmosphere, she decided to fulfill her passion for history and politics, and returned to school to pursue a graduate degree. This venture coincided with a professional transfer for her then-fiancé Jules, so Jennifer attended Louisiana State University in Shreveport, where she achieved a Master's Degree in Liberal Arts and Humanities in 2009. After completing one year in the graduate program at the University of New Orleans, where she took additional courses in post-World War II foreign affairs, she was accepted into the Ph.D. program within the LSU Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2010. Jennifer's primary areas of research are Twentieth Century US Political History and Post-World War II US Foreign Policy. Her doctoral dissertation, entitled "An Elusive Peace: The Foreign Policy Challenges of the Clinton Administration in a Post-Cold War World," focuses on the shift in global conditions following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the unfamiliar trials facing the nation as it ascended into the status of the world's lone superpower. Jennifer taught undergrad history courses at LSU, and hopes to continue and expand her role in this endeavor after her anticipated graduation in August of 2017. She is an LSU Tiger, through and through, but is excited to utilize her method of educating students with energy, objectivity, and humor wherever the road may take her.