

The Role of the Military in the United States Foreign Policy Process



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Introduction

Anastasio Somoza and his two sons ruled Nicaragua with the help of the American government until 1979, when the regime he had built since the 1930s was overwhelmed by the uprising led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front. Just by itself this evolution would not have captured the attention of Washington, however, the danger was that this minor country in Central America would quickly become another stage for much greater expansion of Communist ideology. In the 1980s, tensions between the U.S. and the new radical leftist regime developed. Due to the nature of the Sandinista government, the U.S. Congress refused to relay the promised aid and the Nicaraguans turned to the Cubans in return and subjected the American policies in Latin American to scathing criticism. As he was leaving the office, President Carter finally suspended the aid on the grounds that Nicaragua was now aiding the Communist rebels in neighboring El Salvador¹ and when Ronald Reagan entered the office, he spoke openly about ousting the Sandinistas from the government. To do so President Reagan arranged a number of political and economic measures aimed at destabilizing the government and to reinstitute the friendly regime. Most importantly, in November 1981 Reagan earmarked \$19 million for the Central Intelligence Agency to start training a counterrevolutionary force that became known as the Contras. Led by Nicaraguan military ex-officers, the Contras quickly grew in size and by 1986 numbered more than 15000 troops that were trained and equipped by the Americans.

When in the mid 1980s, the Democratic Congress banned the federal aid to the Contras, President Reagan began to seek alternative ways of helping the anti-Communist forces. One of these alternative ways of preventing the expansion of Soviet influence in the Western hemisphere ended in the much controversial Iran-Contra affair, when the funds from the sale of arms to the Iranian government were funneled to the Contras in spite of the ban. The concerns that the Communists would acquire yet another foothold in the region were so great in the Reagan Administration that the White House did not

¹ The State Department White Paper, *Communist Interference in El Salvador*

stop short of openly confronting the Congress. The proximity of Nicaragua to the United States provided the Reagan Administration with a number of foreign policy options, however, domination of hostile Democrats in both chambers of the U.S. Congress and concerns over stirring extensive international resentment in case of a military invasion, prevented Washington from solving the situation with the help of its armed forces. The invasion would not have been excessively difficult as it was shown during the landing of U.S. forces in Grenada in 1983, but the political price would have been too high.

The U.S. policy towards Nicaragua is a clear illustration of how individual factors in the foreign relations interact and also how the multitude of foreign policy actors struggles to project their particular views and interests. One of these actors that influenced the American stand towards the radical Nicaraguan regime was the Military. Even though political concerns eventually prevailed and the military option was shelved, the fact that the U.S. Government opted for the opposition forces and engaged in aiding the rebel army in spite of the disapproval of the Congress proves that the advice of the Pentagon and armed forces in general was significant. It is certainly not to say that the Pentagon monopolized the foreign policy process, but to show that the Military did play a substantial role.

The influence of the Military was not limited to the decision-making stage, but was present in all phases of the process, including the threat assessment, resource allocation or policy execution. It is a typical example of the need to evaluate the role of the armed forces as a whole.

Perhaps the most interesting question of all that will be raised throughout my thesis stands as follows: Why has the influence of the military upon the U.S. foreign policy process been so scarcely evaluated as a whole?

Every time a specific foreign policy is debated, the question of the military's influence upon it is raised. Such a debate becomes even more contentious if coercive methods are used in the process. In such a case, voices indicating that the U.S. Government has been too quick in relying on armed forces tend to be the loudest of all. These contend that

either the military vigorously exerted its influence within the decision-making structure and prevailed, or that once the policy got under way the military managed to monopolize the means of its execution – thus forcing its will, the initial order by the Government notwithstanding.

The former point is often cloaked in various more or less rational constructions, I am tempted to say conspiracy theories, explaining how the military managed to have its way through its allegedly firm grip on various decision-making instances such as the U.S. Congress or individual Government departments and agencies. In the eyes of some, the power of the U.S. military has grown so much (reasons for the growth given nevertheless often contradict) that individual foreign policy decisions are taken mostly by the Pentagon itself and its proxies in the White House. No matter how absurd such allegations might seem to us, they have lately become a part of the debate on U.S. foreign policy even on academic ground, therefore, I will take them into account in Chapter II where I explain where and how such an influence is projected.

The second most frequent assertion raised is that the U.S. military monopolizes foreign policy means, i.e. diplomacy – political as well as economic and, obviously the more so, coercive methods and resents supervision and accountability. Again, I will deal with the question further onwards, showing how exactly under which scenarios this might be true and, conversely, where this allegation does not stand.

Such a debate over the degree of influence of the military would truly be interesting just by itself, however, in my eyes, it is even more worthwhile to discuss why this issue has so scarcely been debated as a whole, in other words, why so few critics evaluate the military's influence upon all segments of the foreign policy process at once. Debates focus on either decision-making process or on policy execution. You would hardly find one combining the two.

What is even more alarming is the fact that such an examination rarely focuses on what I consider the most susceptible segment of the foreign policy process – the ideological and practical factors influencing the policies, or what I call the foreign policy input.

For academia as well as for the general public, the question of U.S. foreign policy is one of the most frequently debated issues. What Washington does or does not has a global impact and could be traced to even remote corners of the world. The spotlight is therefore focused on factors influencing the whole foreign policy process. Individual schools of thought construct various hierarchies of centers of power, with each extending its tentacles into the foreign policy process, but most of them would agree with the fact that the Military's role is substantial indeed. The basic question lies elsewhere though; since most concur with the military's significance, it is the way such influence is projected that is being debated.

In order to synthesize the Military's influence upon the process of forming of U.S. foreign policy and its execution, it is essential to break the influence down into three segments; foreign policy input, decision-making and execution; evaluate each of them separately and only then assess the process as a whole. The central question then is: Which segment of the three is the most susceptible to the Military's influence and why?

Foreign policy input in the form of information, perception, experience, status or even capabilities, is the primary source of the Military's influence upon the foreign policy process. Decision-makers work with information which is relayed to them from foreign policy perceptors. Since the Military is probably the most exposed perceptor, as it is present in the regions crucial for U.S. national interest, its influence could be traced to the very beginning of the process. The strongest factor here is that such information is first-hand in nature, for who could, for instance, better evaluate sentiment of ordinary Iraqis than commanders in field?

The whole issue becomes even more complex once we consider intelligence, military as well as civil, and the way information individual agencies relay is evaluated and filtered. Military's grip over the intelligence through budgeting and the fact that most modern devices used to collect sensible information are in possession of the Military show what the extend of the Military's control over the foreign policy input is.

Then of-course there is the expertise in the entire security issue, which cannot be replaced by any other institution. Should a threat be evaluated only experts could perform sufficiently and supply their assessment to decision-makers. Capability and other practical factors in general come next, as in the moment of a crucial decision, policy-maker has to choose out of the options he has on the table – military potential being one of them. Military capability is probably the most potent foreign policy tool the Government has at its disposal, therefore, existing military options in a given crisis constitute potent foreign policy factor.

The second segment of the U.S. foreign policy debated here is decision-making. The question here is where and how within the decision-making hierarchy such an influence is projected. In order to identify sources of the Military's influence we have to examine all of its parts; prioritizing, planning, approval and assessment. As it is the case with foreign policy input, some parts of decision-making are more visible than others and thus scrutinized more often. While prioritizing and approval are both fairly exposed, planning and evaluation are often overlooked and underestimated.

First of all, it is essential to examine individual actors in the foreign policy decision-making, such as the White House, individual departments, the CIA or the Congress, as the resulting policies are usually the intersection of priorities of all of these institutions and agencies. Hence the role of the Military must always be assessed in relation to the other actors.

The Military's position in the decision-making system evolves. Over the time, international position of the United States has changed and so has the potential of the armed forces. With the growing influence of America in global politics, the role of the armed forces as the guarantor of the peace and stability in international relations increased. Gradually, the size of the *forces in being* grew and sidetracked the traditional approach based on mobilizing *reserves*. This shift would have clear impact on the role of the Military in the foreign policy process as will be explained later. Political consequences of military measures mounted as well, since after the advent of nuclear weapons the armed forces were provided with the capability to throw the entire world into a

catastrophic war with millions of casualties. Thus a new *fusionist* approach combining strictly military matters with other political and economic considerations has often been invoked and the orthodox *purist* perception of the role of the armed forces as strictly limited to the military matters. Such a development has introduced a new element into the decision-making system and undoubtedly highlighted the role of the armed forces in it.

On the other hand, *total* wars of the past when unconditional surrender of the adversary was expected and until then there was no room for negotiation, as it was in the case in both world wars, were replaced by a more modest concept of *limited* wars with limited objectives to be pursued. Such an approach required the political leadership to firmly control the course of action from the beginning to the very end and to carefully combine political, economic and military means in order to achieve desirable goals. As a result the Military lost its monopoly during the times of war.

A less visible but still crucial part of the decision-making process is the phase when the policies are being planned, programs drawn up and budget items selected. The inner workings of governmental institutions are very complex and the entity with the greatest potential to influence individual segments of the process thus stands a fair chance of influencing the overall results as well. The planning, programming and budgeting process related to foreign policy issues is highly susceptible to the influence of the Pentagon and therefore, it is essential to examine it as well.

As far as the Military's role in the policy execution is concerned, it is central to begin with the system of government that produces the policy and distinguish between a loosely organized entity and a highly centralized one. Over the time, the U.S. government system evolved and at different periods of time contained elements of both. The role of the Military thus depends also on the level of centralization of the system. There is a long way from the point at which the decision is taken to the point at which it is executed and during the process the policy is subjected to interpretation of the individual levels to which the performance of the policy is delegated. Vaguely defined missions for the armed forces or diplomatic corps provide substantial room for them to

maneuver and shape the policies along the way. The resulting policy could then differ in a significant way from the original concept of the policymakers.

The last phase of the policy execution is monitoring or policy evaluation. Since it is the policy executioners that evaluate the consequences of the policies, their judgment is central to the policymakers. Individual measures and policies are being constantly monitored, evaluated and adjusted as a result, and since the Military provides the bulk of this foreign policy feed-back, its role in this particular segment of the foreign policy process is far from negligible.

In order to illustrate the assertions made above, I have selected the case of the U.S. policy towards Iran. In all three of the basic phases, the Military managed to play a substantial role. U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War has been pulled in several directions also thanks to the fact that America has lost its principal enemy. After the attacks of September 11, it seems that Washington has focused most of its foreign policy capacities on the Middle East and the Gulf region as the primary source of threats to American national security and, in general, to the stability of the wider region. In the Gulf region, Iran is a player that holds the key to most security related questions, therefore, examining the role of the U.S. Military in the relations between Washington and Tehran could reveal the nature of the contemporary American foreign policy.

Bibliographical note

Careful selection of sources is certainly central to a valuable analysis of the matter. First of all, it is essential to examine the foreign policy process as such, describe the hierarchy of power and assess the influence of individual actors. Only then could we focus on the specifics of the Military in the process. Eventually, we could add a few specific examples illustrating the conclusions made in this thesis.

American National Security is the key source of the information related to the role of individual actors in American foreign policy. The book describes evolution of the United States foreign policy and the actors within it, illuminating the most important trends that have occurred throughout the history and revealing general patterns of the civil-military

relations. Not only does it evaluate the roles of individual actors as such, but it also attempts to draw conclusions from the way they interact. Examination of the issue requires a solid theoretical basis, which was provided mostly by the two books by Samuel Huntington, *Soldier and the State* and *The Common Defense*. Huntington goes far into the U.S. history establishing basic notions of the civil-military relations and shows the evolution of this uneasy partnership during the times of individual crises. Aptly, he pays much attention in American specifics in the matter, which include a unique distribution of the decision-making power over the foreign policy process. The rest of the authors that I used as references for the central thesis were: I.M. Destler and his extensive study *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy*, Lawrence Freedman's conclusions in *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, Walter Millis' *Arms and the State* and Henry T. Nash's *American Foreign Policy*,

The need to encompass up-to-date data and modern theories led me to the use of policy papers and information service provided by the most prominent think-tanks dealing with the political and military issues, including the Council on Foreign Relations, the Brookings Institute, the RAND Corporation or the Center on Strategic and International Studies. Prominent foreign policy experts, Richard Haass or Kenneth Pollack, deal with the current developments in the U.S. foreign policy and draw various valuable conclusions as for the role of the Military in the process. In this thesis, their ideas were central to several points related to the American engagement in the Middle East.

In order to illustrate the role of the Military throughout major foreign policy crises, I relied on the accounts of individual events by Henry A. Kissinger, mainly in his books *The White House Years*, *The Years of Upheaval* and *The Years of Renewal* as well as his broader studies *Diplomacy* and *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*. Kissinger's insight and the fact that he participated on numerous crucial decisions while in the Nixon Administration turn these books into an invaluable source of information. The critical period of the end of the Cold War is covered by Robert L. Hutchings' *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* – a book which certainly deserves attention due to its

detailed account of the transformation of the U.S. foreign policy during the turbulent years of 1989-1991. In order to draw conclusions from the events of the 1990s and the early 2000s I selected various authors of policy papers and shorter monographic studies, such as Ethan B. Kapstein's article *Allies and Armaments* in *Survival*, David Ochmanek's *Military Operations against Terrorist Groups Abroad* by RAND Corp. or Robert I. Rotberg's *Failed States in a World of Terror* in *Foreign Affairs*, all of which provide the most up-to-date accounts of the individual issues.

The case study focusing on the U.S. policy towards Iran rests heavily on recent analyses by prominent experts on the greater Middle Eastern area, such as Kenneth Pollack from Brookings and Richard Haass from the Council on Foreign Relations. In order to provide more perspectives on the issue, I also included records of the hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the threats posed by the Tehran regime or interviews for several think-tanks.

The library of the University of Columbia in New York, where I assembled most of the material used, was certainly an excellent source for my analysis. I am therefore confident that the information provided and conclusions drawn stem from a very solid base.

CHAPTER I

The initial phase of the process – foreign policy *input*

Most of the attention paid to the foreign policy and the role of individual actors within it revolves around the decision-making process, since here, as most would contend, the real core of influence on policymaking lies. The distribution of power over foreign policy stemming from the Constitution and the tradition of the American politics seems to be clear, however, before the procedure reaches the point where various scenarios are evaluated and strategic decisions taken, the range of potential options is already filtered by people and institutions that process the information that are relayed to the policymakers. In addition, the existing conditions in which the U.S. foreign policy is nested also limit the choices that the executive has at its disposal. Decision-makers

seemingly have a boundless space for maneuvering, however, the pre-existing circumstances in which they act and the processing of information provides substantial room for other actors to exert influence upon the whole process as well.

One of these players is the Military, which certainly is one of the strongly determining factors in the initial phase of the foreign policy. First of all, the armed forces and their civilian counterparts in the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the White House Offices or the Congress play a unique role threat estimates and evaluation. Perception of dangers emanating from abroad is often central for the executive as it directly influences the primary role of any government, i.e. protecting the security and integrity of the country. Threats to national security are assessed and interpreted by military officers or people with strong background in the armed forces, as they have the necessary expertise to perform the job effectively. The way such dangers are perceived then directly affects the hierarchy of priorities set by the policymakers. If the experts come to a conclusion that a certain group or a state poses a considerable danger to the U.S. security or interests, the executive has no other choice but to act accordingly. Certain stereotypes governing the perception of danger by military experts thus have an effect upon the foreign policy that is far from negligible. Quite the otherwise in fact, during the Cold War or after the September 11 attacks threat estimates lied in the center of policymaking.

Decision-making does not exist in void. The position of the United States in international affairs has evolved and so have the options for the policymakers. The stronger the U.S. became politically, economically and militarily, the wider the range of choice Washington had. The bipolar world of the post-WW II period rested primarily on military capabilities of the two superpowers, therefore, the military options the U.S. decision-makers had, determined to a large extend the policy they produced. After the Soviet menace evaporated, the bulk of the responsibility for global security and stability has been in the hands of the White House and again, throughout individual crises that emerged since 1989 it proved that the military capabilities the United States had largely determined the missions the executive decided to undertake.

Assessing the role of the Military in the initial phase of the foreign policy, we need to deal even with more subtle ways in which the armed forces penetrated into the process and left their mark on it. One of these less apparent ways has been the huge budget share the Military managed to gain and, in general, the role it has played in the issues related to federal funding, such as weapon system procurement, research and development or operation financing.² Having a say in the primary resource allocation provides the Military with an effective means of determining the distribution of power within the decision-making system, the more so when individual budgetary items relate to such sensitive issues as employment or local contracting.

Information inflow is central in decision-making, the more so if it relates to foreign policy. Foreign intelligence thus plays a crucial role as well.³ Individual agencies charged with information collection and assessment often collaborate with the armed forces or depend on the means of collection that are in possession of the Military, such as the surveillance systems. Even though *per se*, intelligence is independent from the Pentagon, practically, however, it is forced to act in concert with the Military.

The following part deals with the initial phase of the foreign policy process in much greater detail and the reader should thus acquire a much more complex picture of how the pieces of the foreign policy are put together and what role individual actors play.

Threat perception and the armed forces

Out of the inputs into the foreign policy process, threat perception ranks among the most significant. In the world of politics where decision-making is often tuned to evening news that are in turn dominated by events that have enough dramatic twist to capture the attention of ordinary viewers, the role of a threat is central. Media have a distinct multiplying effect on the significance of individual events, the more so on threats that appeal to basic instincts of a citizen. Existence and perception of an external danger has shaped much of the U.S. foreign policy in the last two centuries, thus the role of the

² *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999 pp.564-566

³ Boren, David, *The Intelligence Community. How Crucial*, Foreign Affairs, Summer 1992, p.54

military institutions, as the primary and most prominent perceptor of such threats, has been more than important.

The way the military processes such perception is distinct in a number of ways; it tends to assess adversaries through the prism of military capability more than any other aspect, secondly, it often overestimates the threats since by its very nature it is planning for the worst case scenario, thirdly, the internal momentum in threat-perception by the military is so powerful that any changes in such a perception are slow, and the last but not least, the military has an instinctive tendency to justify its budgetary share and existing weapon programs by overestimating individual dangers to the U.S. national security.

State as well as non-state actors with the capability to endanger U.S. interest could be assessed according to a wide range of features, such as economic vitality, political stability, natural resources, military potential and a number of others. Internal planning processes within the military institutions are set primarily to take into account an adversary's military strength. Other factors are not ignored but significantly played down. In this way, as the military potential of an adversary is central to the threat evaluation, any sign of a military build-up or force re-location is automatically seen as an imminent danger to the U.S. security. Though military capability is just one of the many aspects in the adversary's potential to harm the United States, it tends to shape threat perception by the military to the greatest degree. In this sense, many would be quick to argue that in the course of the Cold War there were moments when threats posed by the Soviet Union were evaluated purely on military terms and as it turned out later with little correctness. "The missile gap" hysteria was one of the most striking examples.

The role of the military is obviously to defend the territorial integrity of the United States and its interests. In order to be able to fulfill that role under all imaginary circumstances, the military has to plan for the worst case scenario. In the process, when an external threat appears, armed forces have to come up with a contingency planning that would provide adequate measures for any steps the adversary would take. The threat might prove to be unfounded in the end, but that does not disqualify the notion

mentioned above, that the military has to be ready in case such threats do materialize. Therefore, perception of such a danger is affected by the role the military plays in the process. As it automatically adjusts to the worst case scenario, it tends to overestimate the menace.

Military institutions are conservative by nature. Military research, development and introduction of new weaponry and strategies are all extremely time-consuming processes. The cliché that the military is always preparing to fight future wars with weapons of the past might not always apply but may, nevertheless, capture the basic problem with threat-perception. Wars and crises of the past do have effects upon the military establishment, but usually wrong lessons are learned, the more so if the military was victorious.⁴ Why should the military change anything when the chosen strategy was vindicated? In such a case basic prejudices are conserved. The same applies to threat perception. Once the military was proved right in pinpointing certain danger, it tends to focus on that particular type of danger, or even an adversary, in the future. Usually until a threat of a diametrically different nature appears which the military underestimates. The post-Cold War U.S. military is a good example. Even though the Soviet threat was gone, it tended to perceive security threats in the same categories as before.

Any governmental institution has a strong survival instinct. Once it acquires a substantial budgetary share, it tends to resist any attempts to scale it down. The military is probably the largest institution of the kind. In order to justify vast discretionary spending on its personnel, weapon systems and operations, it is naturally tempted to play up dangers posed by adversaries. It is not to say that military representatives do that intentionally, but rather that the system as such has tendencies to resist down-sizing by overestimating external threats.

Threat perception is a key element in the U.S. foreign policy process, as it defines the focus of the foreign policy institutions. The primary receptor of external security threats is the military, which thus have significant influence on the way such a threat is assessed

⁴ Freedman, Lawrence, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, St.Martin's Press, New York, 1981, p.20-22

and passed on to decision-makers. As a distinct institution with its own internal processes and interests, the military has a natural tendency to overestimate dangers and be rather slow in changing its focus from threats of the past to those of the present and future.

The United States and its position in international affairs

Factors influencing U.S. foreign policy process do not exist in the void. They are determined to a large extent by the role America plays in the world, in other words by the position the United States occupies in international affairs. This position has been acquired, among other things, thanks to American military capability. Factors significant for the U.S. foreign policy that result from the U.S. international position are therefore largely susceptible to the influence of the military institutions.

Let me briefly examine the notion. The current unparalleled military strength of the United States armed forces has a direct impact on the decision-making process, which is discussed in Chapter 2. Since most thinkable scenarios do not require capabilities the U.S. military does not possess, there is no real necessity to take in partner countries and to distribute the decision-making power among them. This creates an atmosphere where unilateralist thinking flourishes. There is of-course other considerations taken into account when decisions are taken whether to rely on allies or not, but in this particular respect the sheer strength of the U.S. military produces an impetus to go it alone.⁵ The early stage of the Afghan campaign in the fall of 2001 serves as a fresh example.⁶ True, the U.S. decided to go in alone for many reasons, but the most significant out of them was the fact that its military was indeed capable of taking on Taliban and Al-Qaeda by itself.

The problem mentioned above has yet another dimension. Not only do policy-makers tend to exclude partners because of sufficient military capability on the part of the U.S., but they are also inclined to evaluate other country's utility on the grounds of its military potential, which, given the U.S. primacy, is usually negligible. This is indeed logical, but

⁵ Kapstein, Ethan B, *Allies and Armaments*, Survival, Summer2002, p141

⁶ Biddle, Stephen, *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare*, Foreign Affairs, Mar/Apr2003, p31

again, in combination with other factors I have listed so far, it creates an atmosphere of unilateralism, in which inter-allied cooperation does not stand a chance to show its full potential.

Due to unparalleled military strength of the U.S. military there is a strong tendency in the Government to overestimate the capacity of the military to put up with individual crises. Since there is no rival that could match the U.S. directly, some policy-makers are inclined to play down potential difficulties. As a result, military planning is not always fully adequate. The Kosovo campaign of 1999 illustrates how such an overestimation of American capabilities could lead to frustration. The belief that smart weaponry launched from stealth bombers alone could force Serbian forces to abandon Kosovo proved to be unfounded and prolonged the process of seeking a lasting solution to the crisis.

U.S. armed forces forward deployments determine, to a large extent, the importance attributed to individual countries and regions. The notion could of-course be valid even vice-versa, but that does not mean the former is any less valid. When important foreign policy decisions are taken, usually in the wake of an impending crisis, those responsible have to rely on the existing base structure.⁷ Since forward deployments are usually stationed on foreign soil, the U.S. policy-makers are bound to take such measures as to conform to interests or even requirements of the host country. The case of Turkey before the second Gulf War in 2003 is telling. The U.S. leaders had an option to use Turkish soil as a platform from which the U.S. military could invade Iraq, but since the situation of Turkey vis-à-vis the Kurdish minority was complex, the Administration had to maneuver skillfully in order not to feed the fears in Ankara that Turkish interests would be in line. In this sense, we thus have a typical example of how the existing military options have the potential to determine policy-making in practice.

The military's firm grip on factors influencing the U.S. foreign policy is further displayed by the degree to which U.S. policy makers respect the existing military alliance structure. Inter-allied cooperation, joint programs, intelligence sharing, missions and training all have a deep impact on decision-making institutions within the U.S.

⁷ The Department of Defense, Base Structure Report, 2003

Government. And we could develop the notion even further. The scope of military aid, sales and joint production programs is also big enough to pull substantial weight in the foreign policy process. The fact that America has such a thick network of military alliances and other forms of partnership all over the globe is clearly projected in the decision-making process, and the U.S. military thus wields more control over it than it might seem at the first sight.

Forward presence of the U.S. armed forces has yet another impact on the foreign policy process. While decisions whether to interfere with brewing local crises or not is based on thorough assessment of American interests, the simple fact that U.S. troops are stationed in the neighborhood often serves as a justification should the decision be to intervene. American policies in the Middle East, even before the second Gulf War, were to a large extent determined by the fact that the Government had a significant number of troops stationed in the region that could be used in the pursuit of local American interests. Inevitably, the U.S. policies were pro-active. Should the Government have had to call in troops from bases within the U.S., the situation would have required tougher decisions and therefore much more political will. It is an open question whether some U.S. campaigns in the region would have taken place at all.

I am certainly not contending that U.S. policies are determined solely by the fact that there is a large number of military bases abroad, but rather that in the decision-making process the existence of forward deployments is an important factor.

Past experience and lessons learned

The notion that a victorious war is the worst kind of guide for the future might sound like a cliché now, however, in military thinking a strategy that has been vindicated and whose creators have been rewarded with promotions is bound to stick around at least until it is overcome by events. Out of potential factors influencing American foreign policy thinking and decision-making, individual services and the Department of Defense in particular are the most conservative elements, meaning that past experience of these

institutions with conflicts, wars and coercive diplomacy in general is the most apparent source of conduct.

Each and every foreign policy crisis has its own dynamics that is beyond dispute. Thus in most cases, steps the Government takes are of reactive rather than pro-active nature. In a given situation where conditions in the field require instant decisions that go beyond what has been planned for situations of the sort, decisions tend to follow past – in other words tried – patterns, if only because there is no time to come up with brand new approaches. The logic is rather simple – if it worked well in the past crisis, why should it not work now?

Going back to the military ranks; army officers have been put in place based on their performance in past conflicts and wars. Let us say, that an army general received a promotion because he had proved to be an excellent commander in the last war. When the next conflict arrives, what kind of tactics will he use? Exactly the one that won him fame before. The sequence of events in reality is of-course hardly as pure as I have outlined and truly experienced army officers of-course do realize the traps of relying on strategies of the past, but even then I would contend that the internal momentum of the military thinking is often too powerful.

Faced with a security threat a decision-maker has basically two options. Either he uses tools that have been vindicated in the past or he bets on an innovative strategy which has never been tried out in the field. And even if the decision-maker is a visionary who could guess the future conduct of successful wars he is bound to encounter a basic dilemma: should he fail in his quest, he would definitely be held accountable for his deeds. If he uses the strategy that have been proved victorious in the past he could then point to it and justify his conduct in the crisis. Only a few would then argue such a commander is incompetent, for he only did what every sensible man would do. On the other hand, should he rely on the new and untried methods and fail, he has no solid justification apart from his personal judgment. In such a case critics would instantly raise the point of the past experience and ask, quite logically, why he gambled so much when a working strategy was at hand. Faced with potential consequences of his conduct –

often measured in human and material losses, every commander tends to use such a strategy that would, under the worst of all conditions, allowed him to retain his integrity.

Apart from factors influencing the U.S. foreign policy process mentioned above, that have ideological and therefore rather speculative nature, there are numerous factors that are practical and therefore their effect upon foreign policy could easily be revealed.

Budget share for the Military

Out of the inputs into the foreign policy process money has always played a major role. Though on a theoretical level, certain organization with limited resources could enjoy some influence, in practice such an organization must apply for financing to its donor which in turn sets certain criteria, the institution thus becomes highly dependent and often biased as it is forced to meet such criteria. Financing is usually conditional and organizations therefore receive money only if they conform to such established conditions. Budget appropriations are central to the functioning of key Government institutions, their staffing and planning in particular.⁸

Individual aspects of the foreign policy process are dispersed into numerous agencies, departments and organizations. These then logically compete for influence. On the qualitative level, even a small institution could produce a study or a program that could be useful for the foreign policy process as such, however, such an organization inevitably loses its struggle for influence as it lacks the means for getting the product through into the decision-making process. In other words, the less money the institution has, the less likely it is to exert its influence in the foreign policy.

The military as such receives more than any other individual sphere of public financing. This fact is projected in the number of its employees, military and civil, the number and scale of Government-funded programs and eventually in the overall influence of the Military on the foreign policy process.

⁸ Huntington, Samuel P., *The Common Defense*, New York, The Columbia University Press, 1961, pp.3-4

If we compare federal expenditures on individual budget items, we see that with roughly \$450 billion dollars Pentagon is far ahead of all the other departments and agencies. However, what is even more important than the sheer size of the military budget is the structure of the military expenditures. The bulk of it goes to long term research and development programs, existing equipment maintenance, operations upkeep and payroll, in other words items whose financing does not work in yearly cycles, but much longer periods.

Military budgeting has its own internal momentum, which could be altered, however, it is always a complicated and protracted process. Weapon programs are a typical example of how difficult it is to change these processes. The size of individual projects, in terms of investment and local employment, is so great that even if it is quite obvious that certain program has lost its utility, it is not discontinued and Pentagon is virtually forced to buy such produced equipment.⁹ And since capabilities often determine missions, we have a clear path of how budgeting could influence the entire foreign policy process. The B-2 stealth bomber is a typical example. Developed in the 1970s in order to penetrate sophisticated Soviet air defense it was ready for use in the late 1980s. By then, however, the Soviet Union collapsed and there was no need for such an expensive and super-modern aircraft. Nevertheless, the military used its great leverage and justified acquisition of planes worth \$50 billion which were now to be used as a safe means against developing nations instead of B-52s, which would be perfectly adequate against any potential adversary far into the 21st century. The fact that the military spent so much finances on air-craft resulted into relative negligence of land forces, which was revealed most distinctly in the recent Iraqi campaign and in the over-reliance on air power during the Kosovo campaign of 1999.

Procurement of military equipment as such also has a direct impact on the foreign policy process. Even though a decision to support the development and later on procurement of a military system is taken by policymakers, they rely in their decisions on

⁹ Rivers, Mendel L, *National Security in Perspective, Readings in the Military-Industrial Complex*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1972, pp.194-219

the advice and analyses by the Military. It is beyond doubt that the more programs win support of the executive the better for the armed forces. Information about weapon programs relayed to the Government is therefore an easy target for the Military's influence. Apart from the B-2 versus B-52 controversy mentioned above, there are more examples of how the inflation of weapon programs contributed to the assertion of the Military in the foreign policy process. A number of current programs, like the Joint Strike Fighter and the F-22 Raptor¹⁰, consume huge funds every year and will require even more in the future as first batch of this aircraft is supplied to the armed forces. Long-term financial commitment to weapon programs cripples the executive's ability to change the course and forces the Government to stay on tracks laid by the Military.

The same dilemma applies to military operations financing. When engaged militarily there is no discussion over the fact that all necessary means must be devoted to quick and overwhelming victory with minimum human and material losses. When national interests are at stake, even more so if national security is threatened, the priority number one is the military. When a commander in chief asks for additional resources it is almost a rule that the Government automatically grants them. That was true in almost all the wars the U.S. fought over the last two centuries. General Eisenhower in the World War II, MacArthur in Korea, Westmoreland in Vietnam and Schwarzkopf and Franks in Iraq received more or less everything they asked for. By determining the means, these commanders determined even the policies. No matter how inflated the operation budget became over the years of these military engagements, there was no will to curb the expenditures. The nature of the military spending provides Pentagon with great leverage over the foreign policy process.

Domestic issues and the Military

There are more than 2 million people on Pentagon's payroll. That alone is unique among governmental institutions. Whatever should happen with military expenditure will be felt by these employees through their (un)employment and salary. They all have a

¹⁰ *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999 p.263

vote and are thus inclined to elect such politicians that support expansion rather than down-sizing. Congressmen and local officials in their respective constituencies cannot usually afford to ignore such a mass of votes and go along. If they do not support new programs and expansion they at least refrain from attacks on the military budget. The fact that the military budget has a tendency to grow has again a direct impact on the foreign policy process. The more resources are devoted to the military, the lower priority other means receive and the more it is likely that in the moment of a foreign policy engagement Pentagon will be the one to pull most strings.

In his farewell address President Eisenhower warned against military-industrial complex acquiring more and more power over the U.S. political life, particularly foreign policy. Even though the Cold War is long gone and there is not a single theme rivaling in significance the famous "missile gap" argument, the military industry undoubtedly wields substantial power in the foreign policy process.¹¹ Firstly, thanks to individual defense contracts they are receptors of tens of billions of dollars every year. Secondly, since primary defense contractors, such as Lockheed, Boeing, General Dynamics or Northrop Grumman, employ tens of thousands of people, they all have a strong say in local constituencies and are thus heavily supported in the Congress and local assemblies. Lobbying is an extremely effective tool for the contractors. As they are long established in the Pentagon power structure, they have a strong say in the decision-making processes. For instance, in the early 1990s the Pentagon cancelled the second and the third SSN-21 (Seawolf) submarine contracts and the future of General Electric's Electric Boat subsidiary in Groton, Connecticut, was in jeopardy. The Congress, heavily pressed by Connecticut congressmen, refused to accept the cancellation and preserved the jobs of 20000 employees in Groton, even though the two additional Seawolf submarines were clearly abundant. And thirdly, since research and development is left to these private contractors, they determine to a great extent the scale and speed of the introduction of new weaponry. Furthermore, military research and development has a significant spill-

¹¹ Cooling, Benjamin F., *The Military-Industrial Complex: Update on an Old American Issue*, in *The Military in America – Form the Colonial Era to the Present*, ed. Peter Karsten, New York, Free Press, 1980, pp.317-329

over effect on commercial sphere. Dual-use technologies like advanced computing or surveillance equipment fuel large economic sectors and augment the overall importance of the military industry.¹² In general we might say that since research and development is a long term process, decision-making on the part of Pentagon and the military industrial complex in this particular area has an enduring effect on the U.S. armed forces capabilities and thus also on foreign policy options of the Government.

A distinctly American feature is the influence of veterans on the military affairs. Former war servicemen enjoy a high prestige in the society and participate on the political processes as well. It is beyond doubt that these veterans prefer a large and influential military which has a strong say in foreign affairs. As a foreign policy input which acts on a micro level they certainly have to be counted upon.

The role of the intelligence

According to Alexander Hamilton, "accurate and comprehensive knowledge of foreign politics"¹³ was a basis for the young republic's security. The entire decision-making process, especially its effectiveness rests on reliable information and the speed with which it is delivered to the policymakers. Data - their collection, analysis and relay, are central to the initial phase of the foreign policy process. By the time specific policies get under way, numerous decisions have already been taken by those who receive the information and who handle it.

The flow of foreign-policy related information is huge and cannot be relayed to executive institutions in their raw form. They need to be sorted, shortened, properly distilled and analyzed before the first policymaker sees them and make some use of them. What is passed on to the executive and what is removed from official reports has a deep impact on the policy formulation and, therefore, we could expect that an institution that wields most power within the intelligence community will project its power onto the foreign policy process most forcefully.

¹² *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999 p.332

¹³ Hamilton, *Federalist no. 75*

The intelligence community at large has a budget exceeding \$30 billion. Most of these funds are controlled by Pentagon, as most agencies collecting and processing information, like the Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, National Imagery and Mapping Agency or National Reconnaissance Office, are directly subordinated to the Department of Defense. The biggest intelligence organization of all—the Central Intelligence Agency is not a part of the Pentagon's power structure, but since most means it uses for information collection and reconnaissance are provided by the defense community, it de facto lies within DOD's sphere of direct influence. Individual agencies have an access to decision-making or advisory institutions, such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose chairman has a direct access to the President and could therefore effectively influence the foreign policy process.

Intelligence tasking, or in other words a request for specific type of information about a given situation or a subject is another source of influence for the Military. If an institution is asked to provide information of certain nature, it is tempted to collect and relay such information that will eventually justify its utility, meaning that the Military is likely to pass on information and analyses that in the times of a crisis will make policymakers turn to military means. Intelligence gathered before the invasion of Iraq in 2003 indicated that Saddam Hussein had the capability to hit its neighbors or the West with weapons of mass destruction, most notably that he had advanced far in his quest for nuclear weapons.¹⁴ Such a kind of information added to the Government's resolve to resort to military means as a way of stopping the dictator from menacing regional stability. Before the Kosovo air campaign of 1999, allied intelligence provided mostly by American operatives indicated that Serbian forces located in the Kosovo province are vulnerable to air attacks and that these could therefore lead to quick Serbian withdrawal. General Wesley Clark and the Clinton administration thus believed that the military option is feasible even without employment of land forces and opted for the air campaign without much hesitation. Again the kind of information provided contributed directly to a

¹⁴ Gordon, Michael R., *U.S. intelligence: getting the signals wrong*, The New York Times, October 20, 2004

serious decision in the foreign policy process and since the information flow was largely controlled by the Military, we see that its influence was effectively projected.

Instant decision-making is but one part of the process. Another piece of the mosaic is the part intelligence plays in long-term planning. The basis for strategic planning are the intelligence estimates, in these, operatives assess capabilities and threats posed by countries and organizations and derive necessary means of tackling them. If policymakers are to formulate long-term programs they need to rely on information directly from the source. Since these sources are controlled largely by Pentagon through a network of information-gathering and analyzing agencies, it is clear that the Military projects its power even through this channel.

The central question of the whole thesis is which part of the U.S. foreign policy process is the most susceptible to the influence of the Military. Since the range of options that the policymakers are faced with has already been narrowed by the pre-existing conditions and the filtered information inflow, some would argue that the initial phase of the process – what I call the foreign policy *input* lies in the center of the Military's influence over the American foreign policy. During most of the crises of the past and today, what is being debated most often is the decision-making process itself. The policy *input*, in other words the threat perception, forward deployments, capabilities, allied structure, funding or intelligence, is usually perceived as a given constant, which is certainly a mistake. Thus should we have an ambition to assess the role of the Military in the American foreign policy we need to evaluate all segments of the process, including the initial phase. Only then can we arrive at conclusions that describe the current role of the armed forces in the U.S. politics with accuracy and in the context of other relevant factors.

CHAPTER II

Decision-making and the role of the armed forces in the process

The most exposed phase of the foreign policy process, and the one that is probably the most controversial one, is decision-making. Individual actors contend with one another in order to acquire the largest share of influence. The degree to which a certain institution is able to project its views and interests into the actual policy then gives us an idea how powerful this particular actor is. The role of these actors is derived not only from their official – constitutional status in the chain of the foreign policy decision-making, but also from the momentary distribution of power between individual institutions in the Government, which tends to shift during different periods of time and often reflects the role of personalities as well. Thus we could say that the product of the second phase is not a routine conclusion of a process with constant features, but rather an instant intersection of various actors' views, interests and relations.

As it has been established, foreign policy does not exist in void. Conditions for America's role in the world change and so do positions of individual institutions within the decision-making process. Just like in other liberal democracies, the role of the Military in decision-making is bound by civilian control mechanisms, which ought to prevent the armed forces from exerting their hard power on the basic structure of the Government and monopolize key foreign as well as domestic policy processes. On the other hand, we must admit that the Military's role is not negligible at all. The set of foreign policy tools the executive has at its disposal is often limited to either coercive diplomacy or actual war-fighting, both of which could obviously not function without the Military, therefore, even this fact alone assures the armed forces a strong say over the process.

In order to establish the role of the Military in the decision-making, it is necessary to identify the whole set of actors who project their influence upon the process. Thus in the first part, we will examine the structure of the decision-making hierarchy and identify the means through which the actors exert their influence and the ways in which they interact with each other. This assessment respects the evolution in the United States foreign

policy that has occurred in the process over the course of the last two centuries. The evolution has been twofold; firstly, the relative power of individual institutions has changed, and secondly, the concepts of the U.S. foreign policy have shifted as well.

The decision-making consists of three basic elements; prioritizing, planning and resource allocation. All of these segments are susceptible to the influence of the Military, but the degree to which this applies varies. While prioritizing usually lies beyond the scope of the Military's influence, strictly in the hands of civilian policymakers, planning and resource allocation could eventually reflect the views and interests of the armed forces and their civilian counterparts in the Pentagon. Foreign policy planning requires expertise in all of its segments, and as the bulk of the United States' power in the world rests on the strength of its armed forces, contingency planning for worst case scenarios inherently reflects the position of the Military on various foreign policy issues. Resource allocation is often derived from the key points established in the planning phase. And again, since the Military and the Pentagon in general play a substantial role in the planning phase, inevitably, they manage to project their influence upon the resource allocation as well.

The aim of the following paragraphs is not to contend that the Military plays the central role in the decision-making process but rather to clarify those segments that are susceptible to the armed forces' influence and in what ways.

Actors in the foreign policy process

Decision-making as such is not excessively complicated, what is often blurred are the actors that are involved at this stage of the foreign policy process. The U.S. Constitution outlines the basic distribution of power among individual Governmental institutions, however, in practice, the centers of power shifted as the role of the United States in the world politics evolved and the nature of decision-making due to technological development fundamentally changed. During different periods of time the actual power of the actors fluctuated primarily between the President and his White House staff, his cabinet members – especially the heads of the State Department and the Department of

Defense, the Congress and later on even specialized agencies like the National Security Council or the Central Intelligence Agency. In the end, results of the decision-making process depend on momentary balance of power and mutual relations between all of

figure 1 The Constitutional system

these actors. Thus the actual foreign policy decision does not follow a clear line of decision-making but it is the intersection of views and interests of various centers of power.¹⁵

In order to decipher competences and relations between the actors we need to begin with the U.S. Constitution. According to it, the primary initiator and executor of the foreign policy is the President as the head of the Government.¹⁶ He is also the commander in chief, conducts diplomatic activities, proposes legislation and appoints heads of foreign policy missions and other executive agencies and institutions.

¹⁵ Wayne, Stephen J., *The Multiple Influences on U.S. Foreign Policy-Making*, official website of The Council on Foreign Relations, October 31, 2003

¹⁶ Schlesinger, Arthur M. jr., *Imperial Presidency*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1973, p.3

Simultaneously, the President acts not only as the head of the country, but also of the Government cabinet and the party on the national level. We could go even further and argue that he is also the leader of the democratic world and thus the head of various alliances and organizations. On the other hand, the United States Congress has the power to raise and support armies, enact legislation, declare war and confirm nominations of the President to various important executive positions.

Succeeding administrations have struggled with the presidential and congressional prerogative. For instance, in 1812 President James Madison was unsuccessful in trying to prevent the congressional war-hawks from drawing the country into the war with Britain. Usually, however, it was the President who had the upper hand. President Polk in 1846 placed the U.S. troops along the Rio Grande and the Congress was thus forced to accept the *fait accompli* when the deployment resulted into clashes with the Mexican troops. More recently, during the first years of the World War II, Franklin Roosevelt carefully bound America to the allied cause and when the Pearl Harbor came, the Congress was overwhelmed. Both, Harry Truman and George H.W. Bush, did not even wait for the Congress to pass the official declaration of war and justified huge deployment of U.S. forces overseas with a United Nations mandate.

During the last century, communication technologies evolved so much that it significantly affected the way foreign policy decisions were taken. Thanks to the shortened line of communication, the President was now able to process much larger amount of information, consult effectively any or all of the Governmental institutions and also get involved in practical details of the foreign policy execution. "The communication revolution has not only enhanced the executive's ability to receive information, it has also provided him with direct access to operations if he so chooses. For example, President Johnson was able to select bombing targets in Vietnam, President Carter to communicate directly with the on-scene commander in the aborted Iranian hostage rescue mission of 1980, President Bush to discuss timing of the allied cease fire with General Schwarzkopf in the Gulf War in March 1991, and President Clinton to change the mission of the U.S.

troops on the way to Haiti in 1994 from an invasion force to one that would enforce the negotiated settlement of the crisis."¹⁷

The White House staff, the inner circles of advisors and administrators exert their influence upon President and his foreign policy through every-day contact.¹⁸ Presidents pick their closest collaborators from among his close friends and colleagues from the past. Therefore, we could expect that these have significant impact on the first phase of the decision-making. One of the trends related to the White House staff has been its tremendous growth. While during Hoover Presidency it was staffed by three secretaries, a military and a naval aide, and twenty clerks, during Clinton's tenure the White House offices numbered more than four hundred people. With this growth in staff came also the increase in influence upon the foreign policy at the expense of the other actors.

The experience of the World War II brought the Truman Administration to a decision to set up a brand new organization charged primarily with the issues of national security – the National Security Council. Its members, the President, Vice-President, Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State with the statutory advisors – the head of the CIA and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were now meant to coordinate their views and priorities and decide upon a joint course of action. The National Security Advisor would then serve as the closest Presidential aide in the foreign policy matters related to national security. The 1947 National Security Act provided for separate staff to run and support the NSC, so that the involved agencies would not influence the process from within. Over the time, the NSC became very influential in the process and often sidelined the State Department as well as the Pentagon. Several Presidents went even further in concentrating the decision-making power in fewer hands. For instance, President Kennedy, motivated by the Bay of Pigs fiasco, set up inter-agency task forces that dealt with specific issues of foreign policy in the 1960s such as Laos, Berlin and the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Under Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger formalized this concept in the form of Interdepartmental Groups chaired by undersecretaries of respective

¹⁷ Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998, p.96

¹⁸ see the role of Richard Cheney in the Bush Administration in: *The Other President*, The Economist, September 2, 2004

departments. The IGs were responsible for studying problems, formulating policy options and suggesting various alternatives. With respect to decision-making in individual foreign policy issues, such an evolution produced a clear dominance of the NSC over the State Department as it effectively sidelined its respective regional sections. For instance, the Southeast Asia section of the State Department would from now on be overshadowed by a special interdepartmental group focusing on Vietnam and so on.

The changing nature of the decision-making center around the NSC is clearly demonstrated by the events of 1990-1991 related to Iraq. After the August 4 1990 invasion on Kuwait, President Bush held an *ad hoc* meeting that would decide upon the course of action against Iraq.¹⁹ This meeting was attended by 12 people – the President and Vice-President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, the NSC assistant, the chairman of the JCS and the Director of Central Intelligence, the White House Chief of Staff and Spokesman, the military commanders, an undersecretary of defense, and an NSC staff director. However, in October 1991, when the Administration considered various options towards the rebellious Hussein regime, he met only with the Secretary of Defense, the chairman of the JCS and the NSC assistant. This illustrates that the center of the decision-making power often shifts and depends, to the greatest extent, upon the style of work of the President.

In the post-WW II period, the power of the Secretary of State waned not only due to the emergence of the NSC system, but also due to the fact that during most of the crises of the Cold War the President took charge of the foreign policy agenda himself, leaving the Secretary of State to deal with second-rate issues.²⁰ However, again it depended on the President's choice more than on anything else. Nixon chose the rather obscure William Rogers as the Secretary of State partly because he planned to bypass him in most of the important foreign policy decisions.²¹ On the other hand, Reagan wished to stay away from the foreign policy agenda and thus he opted for the strong figures

¹⁹ Hutchings, Robert L., *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, Washington, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, p.155

²⁰ Nash, Henry T., *American Foreign Policy*, Homewood, Dorsey Press, p.30

²¹ Kissinger, Henry A., *White House Years*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1979 pp.26-31

figure 2 The Department of Defense

figure 3 The State Department

Alexander Haig, the former White House Chief of Staff and NATO commander, and George Shultz, who occupied various cabinet posts before coming to the State.

There have been numerous combinations of active or passive Presidents and their Secretaries of State, weak or strong, with the foreign policy power shifting about the cabinet, however, there is one field, in which the State Department has always had the upper hand – the everyday conduct of foreign policy. The Department has the mandate and the capabilities to coordinate and to run the diplomatic agenda in various regions simultaneously, quite unlike the other actors.

The specific position of the Pentagon and the Military in the process will be dealt with later, however, there are certain general trends which affect the armed forces' position vis-à-vis the remaining foreign policy actors. First of all, as the gravity of the decisions upon military matters increased due to the technological advancement in the nuclear and conventional weaponry, the position of military strategists and specialists was strengthened as a result. During the Cold War, political consequences of the military strategy were so great that the Military, thanks to its advisory status and expertise, gained an indirect access to the highest level of the decision-making process. The trend was eventually reflected in the 1986 Defense Reorganization Act which granted the chairman and other members of the JCS the right to go directly to the President and discuss their views. Secondly, the role of the Pentagon depended on the momentary priorities of the respective administration, i.e. during a crisis it increased and vice versa. The three main processes of the decision-making – resource allocation, planning, and policy coordination and monitoring have always been affected by the Military, however, the extent to which the Pentagon managed to play an active role depended to the President and his style of work and the foreign policy circumstances.

The President leans on the Military not only for advice and expertise during contingency planning, but also for support in important decisions. Support of uniformed leaders has often been central in rallying the public and congressional support for foreign policy decisions. In 1986, President Reagan's decision to scrap unilaterally the limits of SALT II on offensive systems, a step with a major impact on Soviet-American relations,

would probably have fell through had it not been for the endorsement of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Similarly, President Bush's intention to cut the American deployments in Europe in half in 1990,²² would have been very difficult to sustain had the Military not been on his side in the matter.²³

According to the 1947 National Security Act, the primary role of the Central Intelligence Agency is the overall coordination and integration of intelligence efforts of various governmental groups engaged in national security matters, nevertheless, over the time the position of the CIA in the foreign policy process evolved. Apart from the intelligence collection and coordination, the CIA became active in conducting various covert as well as overt missions in foreign countries and thus exerted its influence on the foreign policy process as well. To illustrate the point, one could use the case of Nicaragua in 1980, when the efforts of the Reagan administration to destabilize the Sandinista government were conducted mostly by CIA officers and with the use of CIA resources and facilities. Even though theoretically, it was supposed to be either the NSC or the State and Defense Department running the activities, the presidential choice was to bypass the official channels of policymaking and rely on the CIA. The Agency has since been subjected to thorough congressional scrutiny and it can no longer play a major role as it did in Nicaragua or Chile in the 1970s, due to its position as the intelligence receiver and coordinator, it still remains one of the major players in the foreign policy process.

As it has been explained, resource allocation is one of the most important phases in the foreign policy process. Therefore, even the role of the Office of Management and Budget within the White House is not negligible.²⁴ Quite otherwise in fact. In the early days of the George H.W. Bush's presidency, it was the head of the OMB, Richard Darman, who was considered the most influential figure that shaped Bush's domestic as well as foreign policy agenda.²⁵

²² Hutchings, Robert L., *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, Washington, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, pp.157-162

²³ Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998, p112

²⁴ Sorensen, Theodore C., *Decision Making in the White House*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1963, pp.29-30

²⁵ Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998, p.114

The actor that certainly deserves attention is the U.S. Congress. According to Constitution the House and the Senate do not wield any explicit national security power, however, both chambers do occupy an important place in the foreign policy process, because the system grants them the power to declare war, raise and support armies and the navy, enacts legislation governing the armed forces, call the militia and make all laws which are "necessary and proper" for carrying out these functions.²⁶

As it has been the case with other actors, the position of the Congress within the foreign policy process evolved over the time. In the first years after the World War II, mainly due to the legacy left by the powerful presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, as far as the decision-making is concerned, the Congress remained on sidelines. Generally speaking, the Capitol Hill became supportive of the early Cold War foreign policy and was even more hawkish in major issues than the administration themselves. For instance, congressional leaders, such as Senator Vanderbilt, fought even for more vigorous measures against the encroaching Soviet menace. The public consensus, lack of information, perception of the threat and the need for solidarity were all reasons why the Congress deferred to the executive. In many cases, it virtually gave a blank check to the administrations in advance and authorized the President to act unilaterally, namely on Formosa (1955), Cuba (1962) and the Gulf of Tonkin (1964).²⁷

Due to the nature of the proceedings, congressional activities are essentially slow, open and also very "leaky," and therefore, its influence upon the foreign policy process is very limited. Investigative hearings, debates or resolutions all take a lot of time and this is one of the reasons why the Congress often looks up to the President to take the lead during crises that require proactive approach and instant decisions. Most of the legislation related to the foreign policy matters originates in the special congressional committees, namely the House National Security and Senate Armed Services Committee, the two Intelligence committees and the relevant subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations committee. In generally, we might say that hundreds of

²⁶ Haass, *Congressional Power*, p.3

²⁷ Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998, p.125

committees staff members are directly or peripherally involved in the foreign policy and national security issues, nevertheless, due to the natural limitation of such an involvement, the role of the Congress should not be exaggerated.

One of the areas where the Capitol Hill does have a say is the budgeting process.²⁸ On the other hand, the detailed work on individual items of the foreign policy budget prevents the Congress from focusing on the issues of a "grand strategy." The multiplicity of interests within both chambers and the limited grounds for consensus resulting from these diverse priorities do not allow the Congress to speak in one voice and exert its influence on the decision-making process to a larger extent.

The only direct way for the Congress to interfere with U.S. foreign policy apart from budgeting is the right to ask for information – hold investigative hearings and require temporary or permanent reporting by certain executive institutions. Especially the Senate uses such a privilege quite often, but generally speaking, it is the domestic issues related to foreign policy and military matters that capture the attention of most congressmen. Bound to their respective constituencies, senators and representatives are expected to lobby for their bases of supporters. Domestic national security issues have extensive economic consequences for individual regions, states and counties. These basic questions are not related to the location of U.S. armed forces bases and contracts of the Governmental institutions to the local suppliers, but also to the issues like where the National Guard Armories are to be placed and so on.

In general, we might argue that the role of the Congress in the foreign policy process is more concerned with *structure* than *strategy*. While the executive deals with more long-term issues like the overall restructuring of the armed forces, congressmen are faced more acutely with the question of how many jobs would their constituency lose once an army base or a major arms manufacturer have to close down. Obviously, in the case of the House of Representatives, the two-year election term does not allow the members to get involved in long-term matters too much, since when the election

²⁸ An interview with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas R. Pickering, *The Changing Dynamics of U.S. Foreign Policy-Making*, official website of the Council on Foreign Relations, October 10, 2003

reckoning comes, the new policy might still not be under way and the voters would not a visible result of their representative work.

The Congress has a number of rather subtle ways of interfering with the executive's monopoly over the foreign policy. Many times in the history, the Capitol Hill used the cracks in the seemingly monolithic structure of the executive and managed to have its way in spite of the apparent disadvantages. Even the limited choice of foreign policy tools was often enough for either of the chambers to drive a wedge between individual departments or even between individual sections or services of a single department. A prime example is the Iran-Contra affair of the late 1980s. The Congress fully used its right to ask the members of the executive to explain the programs and policies related to the illicit arms sale to the Nicaraguan Contras and managed to a certain extent to reveal internal controversies not only between individual armed services, but also between the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the White House.

The Iran-Contra affair, nevertheless, also reveals one of the greatest weaknesses of the Congress as a foreign policy player. One of the "stars" of the hearings was a NSC staffer, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, who portrayed himself as a faithful follower of the orders from his superiors. After the polls showed that the public opinion rallied behind North as a loyal military professional obeying the chain of command and serving his country, some of the members of the investigation committee openly praised the Lieutenant Colonel in spite of the fact that he admitted to some serious violations of the military rules and even to the fact that he lied before the Congress. Quite reasonably, the respective congressmen took into account their reelection chances and had to swing in the direction of the public opinion to improve them. With respect to the role of the Congress within the foreign policy system, this episode clearly shows that neither of the two chambers could fully rival the other actors mentioned earlier.

One of the important factors in the U.S. foreign policy is the arms sales. Here, the role of the Congress is very far from being negligible as it could generate legislation limiting or banning the sale of individual systems or all of them to some countries or regions, or set conditions to be met before the sale could materialize. Congressional

challenges to the Presidential status in foreign assistance and arms sales began in the late 1960s as the national consensus with respect to the Southeast Asia evaporated. Chaired by Senator Fulbright, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee took the lead and in 1969 produced the so-called "National Commitments Resolution,"²⁹ which effectively curtailed the right of the President to commit to the assistance to a foreign country. The power of the Congress over the budgetary items was fully felt by the Nixon Administration from 1969 to 1975 when the tragic short-sightedness of the hostile Congress contributed to the eventual collapse of the Republic of Vietnam, because it could no longer rely, besides the withdrawing troops, on financial aid from the United States and repel the North Vietnamese aggression. The same strategy was applied to the arms sales to Turkey, after the invasion of Cyprus by Turkey using American arms in 1974. The Congress stopped all shipments of arms to Ankara and allowed the executive to renew them only after the White House conceded to comparable assistance to another U.S. NATO ally – Greece. Even later on there were numerous battles fought over individual line items to be sold to regimes with questionable reputation or motives. Advanced technology in the hands of potential adversaries of the U.S. or its allies has always been an issue. For instance, in 1986 when the Reagan Administration brokered the sale of AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia and only a few votes sustained the deal in the Senate.

When it comes to the foreign policy legislation, probably the most contentious act ever passed on the Capitol Hill was the War Powers Act of 1973. "The language of the act explicitly requires the President to report to Congress, within 48 hours of their deployment, any commitment of troops to actual or imminent hostilities or any introduction of troops into the territory, air-space, or waters of a foreign nation while they are equipped for combat. The act also requires the President to consult with the Congress prior to so acting, though the nature of the consultation is not spelled out. Further, the act requires the Congress to approve or disapprove the continued use of troops within 60 days of their commitment; if President certifies that troop safety

²⁹ Haass, Congressional power p6

requires it, this can be stretched to 90 days.”³⁰ Between 1973 and 1991 there were 25 instances when the War Powers Act was applicable, nevertheless, the Congress never opted to restrain the President from deploying the troops into action. There was only a minor exception related to Lebanon, when in 1983, after 241 marines were killed in terrorist attacks, the Congress had the President sign a resolution limiting the eventual commitment of U.S. troops in this Middle Eastern country.

The most serious test of the Act came in 1990-1991 when the President Bush committed the U.S. troops to extensive fighting even though this deployment was never authorized by the Congress and the war on Iraq was never declared. In the late 1990, Bush deliberately changed the defensive posture of the forces deployed to protect Saudi Arabia to an offensive one and increased the number of troops from 200.000 to more than 500.000, in other words the number that the U.S. had at the peak of the Vietnam conflict, including 10 ground divisions, 10 tactical air wings and 6 carrier battle groups. To justify all this, the President used the United Nations resolution and in fact never intended to even ask the Congress to approve the attack. Even though some senators and congressmen were unhappy with such a conduct, in the wake of the impending crisis there appeared no serious opposition to the Bush’s conduct. The limited role of the Congress in the foreign policy decision-making was thus fully revealed.

In the post-Cold War period the role of the Congress in foreign policy would increasingly relate to the general oversight of the executive, preserving information openness of the governmental institutions, and curbing or increasing budgetary expenses on individual programs or line items. The Congress will certainly remain an active player in the foreign policy process, which was recently demonstrated by the increasing tendency of the relevant congressional committees to oversee the course of action in Iraq and Afghanistan, the more so when it has become clear that the final bill for the military campaigns and reconstruction activities will be much higher than it was anticipated.

³⁰ Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998, p134

Locating the Military in the decision-making process – historical development

From the very onset the American political system has had numerous checks on the military influence over domestic as well as foreign politics. In the first century of the independent republic individual states were extremely wary of a powerful central Government which would have a large army at its disposal. Therefore, federal troops were called in only when large-scale operations were needed. Andrew Jackson's campaign against the Spanish and Indians in the Floridas and General Polk's against Mexicans were exceptional occasions on which the federal military wielded considerable power. Leading successful offensives, Jackson and Polk gradually monopolized decision-making over the course of the campaigns and their deliberation was thus crucial for foreign relations of the United States vis-à-vis Spain, Mexico and Indian tribes.³¹

The climax of the military's power over the political process in the 19th century came during the Civil War when General Grant virtually established himself as the ruler of the occupied Southern states. Grant and Sherman controlled the course of military campaigns, relations with local authorities and once the situation stabilized their officers ran local Governments and public institutions until Washington resolved the dilemma of the return of the South under the Union flag. Soon after the conflict, federal army was downsized and standing troops were kept at minimum.

Apart from these limited periods of warfare, federal military played only secondary roles such as participating on internal development programs such as road and rail-road construction, trade protection and contingency planning. It took more than 30 years before the Army was convened again, this time against the Spanish in 1898. The pace of events lead again to the military's influence upon the decision-making process, when the early limited victories turned into large-scale operations and eventual occupation of extensive territories once controlled by Spain.

³¹ Huntington, Samuel P., *Soldier and the State*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1957, pp.193-222

However, the Spanish war represented only a fraction of what was about to unfold in Europe a few years later. Once the decision was made to side with the Allies in the Great War, decision-making powers were delegated to the General staff in Europe, namely to General Pershing, who from then on controlled not only military planning, but also political and economic relations with key European countries. After the war, the military establishment, due to the extensive organization network, took over distribution of food and other material aid in the impoverished continent. The speed with which the victorious army was dissolved in the aftermath shows the traditional U.S. approach to standing armies in the first decades of the 20th century. The logic was simple; once a threat materializes reserves are called in and the danger contained. Since the experience was that this concept had always worked, a large standing army had only a few supporters before the World War II.

Pearl Harbor marked a turning point in the approach towards maintaining larger peace-time forces. Even traditional skeptics realized that forward defense would have placed the United States in much better position vis-à-vis Japanese forces. Magnitude of the threat again placed the Military in a strong position within the decision-making process. Once the decision was made to engage in the Pacific and in Europe, the bulk of powers was vested in local commanders, General Eisenhower and Admiral Nimitz. A decision whether Berlin was to be taken or left to the Soviets was, for example, ultimately left to the Military. Due to superior organization and resources the Military, namely its Operation Division and Civil Affairs Division, controlled all the main processes during the war – military, political as well as economic. The State War Coordination Committee established in 1944 with the aim of reconciling the views of the War Department and the Military with that of the State Department, nevertheless, the former were quick to monopolize all important strategic decision, leaving the State Secretary Hull with only a secondary function of preparing the charter of the United Nations. Administration of occupied territories in Germany and Japan after the war were then left in the hands of Douglas MacArthur and Lucius Clay, both of which had a firm grip on the

situation thanks to their knowledge of the respective countries and superior civilian and military institutions at their disposal.

The World War II accumulated enormous power in the hands of the Military and although the armed forces were reduced from 8m to less than 2m, the concept of forces-in-being was firmly established. First years of the Cold War witnessed institutionalization of the war-time practice of civil-military coordination and distribution of power among individual organizations. The National Security Act of 1947 officially established the Joint Chiefs of Staff that were to become the hinge between the Military and its individual services and their civilian counterparts.

The Korean and Vietnam conflicts then confirmed the trend that in the times of war the power of the military over the decision-making process grows, as it accumulates large resources and its organization balloons. On the other hand, during both conflicts the civilian power re-asserted itself as, first, President Truman released General MacArthur from command because he had started to meddle into strategic planning and then President Johnson, who towards the end of his second term reversed decisions of his generals about troop levels and strategic bombing.

The two conflicts brought a brand new approach to war-time planning and decision-making and influenced the role of the Military for the decades to come. For the first time, American forces faced a limited conflict, which, unlike the total war of the past, required careful coordination of political and military moves in order to achieve limited objectives. As a result, civilian authorities sought to control strategic decisions so as to prevent escalation of a conflict into a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Therefore, the 1958 National Security Act strengthened the role of the Secretary of Defense and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). The Act also emphasized the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by increasing the size of its staff to 400 personnel and giving more powers to its chairman. Furthermore, the Strategic Air Command and the Alaskan Command were excluded from the chain of command of the Military.

Secretary of Defense of the Kennedy Administration McNamara went even further and introduced system analysis into the Military organization and curtailed Military's influence

on procurement and strategic decisions, which resulted into the Military's exclusion from the key decision-making processes and blocked it from influencing American foreign policy. The strife to curb power of the Military was further augmented by the Bay of Pigs fiasco, which, as President Kennedy, believed, resulted from Pentagon's growing arrogance and short-sightedness. During the late 1960s and early 1970s the Military's power was at a minimum as the Congress sought to participate on all strategic decisions and cut funding of several weapon programs which it deemed expedient. Nevertheless, in the late 1970s the Soviet military power dangerously grew and most policymakers realized the necessity to boost military spending and introduce new elements into the military organization. Especially, coordination of individual services was considered the key to more effective conduct of warfare. Before, the Army, Navy and the Air Force often clashed as their budget priorities and weapons development programs collided. Now the idea was that the three services would coordinate their goals and joint actions would thus be more practicable.

These efforts culminated in 1986 when an act sponsored by U.S. Senators Goldwater and Nichols was passed. This act is considered to be the greatest reform of the Military since the 1920s. It gave explicit powers to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and granted him direct access to the President, the National Security Council and the Secretary of Defense. Among other things, the Act also strengthened powers of commanders in field and provided for direct Administration's control over the course of military campaigns.

Strengthened powers of the Military during Reagan's presidency was demonstrated by the fact that the President, after making a strategic decision to invade Grenada in 1983 and bomb Libya in 1986, left the operations entirely in the hands of the military establishment. True, the key decisions were reached within the civilian institutions, however, implications of the campaigns themselves often placed the Administration in a fait-accompli situation when the events already got their own momentum and it was thus impossible to reverse the course. In the contest with civilian institutions, especially the OSD and the State Department, the Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger along with

the Joint Chiefs of Staff clearly had an upper hand. This trend resulted into the most serious crisis in the civil-military relations vis-à-vis American foreign policy – the Iran Contra affair.³² The laissez-faire approach the Reagan Administration applied to the military establishment led to the misuse of power by top military officials who directed money earned from the sale of weapons to Iran to Nicaraguan rebels, apparently without the knowledge of the President and other members of the National Security Council. The Iran-Contra affair was a clear demonstration of the Military's ability to project its power into foreign relations of the United States.

During the Bush Administration, marked by the Gulf conflict, the Joint Chiefs of Staff enjoyed extensive powers as well, in particular in the course of events following the liberation of Kuwait, when the chairman of JCS Collin Powell first persuaded the President to refrain from extensively invading Iraq proper and then to passively support the Shiite and Kurdish uprising. General Shalikashvili, who became the chairman under President Clinton, changed the course considerably and allowed the civilian part of the decision-making hierarchy to reassert itself – the trend that was projected for instance in the mild approach of the Administration to the Bosnian crisis.

Power of the Military rose and declined also with the support of the public and, more importantly the U.S. Congress. In the 1950s and 1960s the Congress remained on the sidelines and when it made itself heard it usually called for stronger military and increased spending on weapon programs. It often served as an arbiter between the civilian and military establishments. This role was fully exposed after the recall of General MacArthur from the Korean command, when the Congress Armed Service Committee held hearings with the aim of revealing whether the hero general overreached himself or became a victim of the Truman's Administration infighting.

The Congress' appetite for power rose with the general discontent with the Vietnam conflict in the late 1960s. Democrats who dominated it considered the Military's powers too great and, in the eyes of some congressmen, this fact was the primary source of the

³² The Oxford Companion to American Military History, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp.340-341

mishandled war. The Capitol Hill, above all the Democratic Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield, curtailed numerous weapon programs and military spending in general and even aimed at reducing the U.S. base force abroad, namely in Korea, which fortunately never materialized.

When it became clear that compared with the Soviet conventional army, the U.S. forces were lagging behind towards the end of the 1970s, even the Congress made an about face and called for increased spending.

Rivaling concepts: forces-in-being versus reserves

The first trend that we could identify in the account of events above is the shift from the traditional reliance of the Government on reserve forces to the modern concept of forces-in-being, in other words, a large standing army. This gradual change has had a direct impact on the Military's influence upon the foreign policy process, since the more battle ready troops there were, the bigger the defense establishment had to be and the more resources it consumed. And with the power over the federal budget always came the influence over important strategic decisions.

As it has been explained, the United States had always had inhibitions maintaining large land and naval forces. The fear of the omnipotent central Government was bigger than the potential benefit of time saved during a crisis. Up until the World War II, this strategy proved worthwhile, as America had always had enough time to call in reserves and save the day. The Mexican War of 1846, the Civil War, the Spanish War of 1898 or the World War I all began with the United States having only a few well-trained forces. In the end, due to its economic and logistical superiority, America always prevailed. Thus policymakers were never tempted to keep larger number of troops during peace-time. The only experience they had up to the WW II was that when a national security threat appears, America could assemble necessary forces before the danger will have materialized. This belief was, among other things, one of the basic premises of the isolationist foreign policy.

The experience of the sudden Japanese attack and the initial superiority of the Axis' armament programs reminded Washington that the times had changed and with the global responsibility America acquired came the necessity to maintain large and competent forces. The Soviet menace after WW II in the late 1940s and early 1950s finally persuaded decision-makers that it is vital for the United States to keep substantial armed forces even in the peace-time.³³ Along with the other traditional taboo broken, that of "entangling alliances," the new forces-in-being concept became one of the corner stones of American military strategy and also its foreign policy. With this forward defense approach, when numerous divisions were maintained in Europe, came a massive increase of the Military's power over the foreign policy process compared to the inter-war period.

Having thousands of troops stationed on foreign soil gives the deploying country a significant leverage. When strategic balance or local stability rests on the presence of these forces, the host country has to meet conditions required by the guest military power. Thus the strongest means of diplomacy of such a power is the Military. Such a situation occurred in the Cold War Europe when hundreds of thousands of American troops were kept in Germany and elsewhere and these forces maintained strategic balance that formed the backbone of the bipolar world. Therefore, thanks to the central role American divisions played in Europe as well as in Asia, the role of Pentagon grew in significance.

Larger forces-in-being required much more extensive maintenance, training, bureaucratic apparatus, employed more people and therefore consumed more funds from the federal budget. Subsequently, a larger share of the federal funding brought ever more power to Pentagon. Only a glance at organization charts of two central institutions of U.S. foreign policy, the State Department and the Department of Defense gives us an idea about their real power. While the State Department employs around 25000 personnel worldwide, there are more than three quarters of a million civilians on Pentagon's payroll. Even without adding uniformed personnel to that number it is clear that the Defense Department wields more practical power. If we have a look at the

³³ Huntington, Samuel P., *The Common Defense*, New York, The Columbia University Press, 1961, p.45

structure of American civilian personnel station abroad we see yet another sign of the Military's strength.

The chief adviser on military issues to the U.S. ambassador is the head of the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). MAAG includes the local heads of the Agency for International Development (AID) as well as the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), who help form and execute U.S. policies abroad. Frequently, it is the head of MAAG who has the strongest say in the ambassador's team thanks to the power and resources the Department of Defense wields. Not only did military personnel frequently outnumber State department personnel assigned to a given overseas mission, but many of the competing bureaucracies, such as those of AID and USIA, were relatively weak in the field and in the Washington staffing necessary to support field operations. "Also, the extensive field operations of the MAAGs provided both, timely information and access to important local decision-makers-further reasons for deference to military advice and policy influence."³⁴ For example, by the 1960s, a few years after the introduction of MAAGs, there were already 61 U.S. MAAGs or comparable advisory groups consisting of 15000 U.S. and local nationals, with additional thousands of U.S. military and Department of Defense personnel in supporting positions.³⁵ Such a development presents a proof that superior organizational and personnel capacities of the Military are often translated into practical influence of the key foreign policy processes.

In addition to the growing number of troops ready to be deployed came the increase in sophistication of the armed forces. The art of warfare has never been easy, nevertheless, in the second half of the 20th century, the number of people who could advise on military matters with full competence sharply decreased. Advanced rocketry, stealth technology, "smart" ammunition or, above all, nuclear weapons represent a significant shift from the traditional concepts of warfare of the pre-WW II times. As such, these military marvels require truly competent military strategists, as their employment during conflicts could produce significant results. Having capabilities that could deliver a

³⁴ Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998, p.178

³⁵ Maxwell Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, New York, Norton, 1972, p.249

decisive edge over opponent's armed forces presents a crucial tool to every country's foreign policy apparatus, and if such a capability is at hand, power of the Military in the decision-making process necessarily increases. Since, technologically, the American military has been in the lead ever since the WW II, we could argue that with the cutting edge weaponry also came a stronger say in foreign policy matters.

Purist versus fusionist approach

As far as the decision-making is concerned, the Military does not represent a monolithic entity as it is sometimes perceived. The Military's definition of its own role develops and the argument about whether armed forces should have a say over strategic political decisions is far from being settled. The two opposing camps represent the two basic poles in understanding of the Military's role. On the one side, there are military *purists*, who see armed forces as strict executors of policies formulated by civilians. On the other side, there are those, referred to as *fusionists*, who recognize that military matters are mixed with political and economic matters to such a degree that the Military's role cannot be reduced to fighting wars, but has to penetrate into the decision-making process as well.

General Douglas MacArthur is remembered as one of the greatest commanders of the 20th century. Yet, he was also known for understanding the military matters as closely intertwined with politics, hence his controversy over the use of conventional forces in Korea in conflict with Presidential orders and possible employment of nuclear arms against Communist China.³⁶ General MacArthur's vision of the Military's role in the foreign policy process was, nevertheless, typically *purist*. Addressing the cadets at West Point in 1962 he explained that: "Your mission remains fixed, determined, inviolable – it is to win our wars. Everything else in your professional career is but corollary to this vital dedication"³⁷

³⁶ Kissinger, Henry A., *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, New York, Council on Foreign Relations, Harper and Brothers, 1957, pp.43-54

³⁷ macarthur, address delivered at west point may 12 1962

Military *purists* do recognize the complexity of national security issues, but they hold that crucial decisions are made by civilian policymakers. A professional officer is an expert in military matters and his primary role is to determine what force is needed and how it can be utilized most effectively. Their role in the decision-making process is thus limited only to providing advice on the military component. On the other hand, military *fusionists* maintain that the modern complexity of national security issues does not allow effective and precise distinction between political, economic and military issues, and therefore, the Military's role cannot be seen only through the prism of its war-fighting capacity. "In a nuclear world in which the military consumes significant economic resources and in which the use of force may have tremendous political implications, both domestic and international, military decisions have economic and political consequences and vice versa. Therefore, in giving their advice, professional officers should incorporate political and economic considerations along with military factors."³⁸

The significance of the Military in the decision-making process is also marked by this shift of the Military's understanding of its own role – from the *purist* concept towards the *fusionist* one. After the WW II even civilian policymakers have tended to be *fusionists*. Realizing the broad implications of the potential use of force and the scale of resources devoted to armed forces, they have often asked the military advisers to incorporate political and economic factors into their judgments. Early into the Cold War, President Eisenhower and Kennedy specifically instructed their military staff to reflect other than purely military considerations in their professional advice. When addressing the West Point cadets in 1962 JFK explained that: "The non-military problems which you will face will also be most demanding – diplomatic, political and economic. You will need to know and understand not only the foreign policy of the United States, but the foreign policy of all countries scattered around the world. You will need to understand the importance of military power and also the limits of military power. You will have an obligation to deter war as well as to fight it."³⁹ In order to make an informed decision, the President has to

³⁸ Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998, p.189

³⁹ JFK Commencement Address West Point June 1962

consider all accessible facts in the context of political, economic and military implications, therefore, even for Kennedy and Eisenhower it was much more practical to receive military advice which contained elements of political and economic nature. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the 1960s, Maxwell Taylor, fully shared Kennedy's vision. He asserted that unless a military professional incorporates other than purely military matters into his advice, he stands no chance in trying to persuade the President about desirable course of action.

The shift towards the *fusionist* approach was further augmented by incorporation of the broader considerations into military education and training programs. Since 1950s, when first of these programs were added into military curricula, military colleges have covered all spheres of social sciences as well as physical sciences and engineering. Young military officers entering the U.S. armed forces or the Defense Department have since then been fully equipped to give a broad advice on military matters which could then be utilized on the decision-making level.

It is true that the *fusionist* approach has become a sort of a double-edged sword.⁴⁰ As military officers tailor their advice so that their civilian counterparts could easily understand and utilize it, the Military becomes more influential within the decision-making process. When civilian authorities clearly prefer advice which includes military and political aspects, such a situation encourages the Military advisers to broaden their expertise.

Alongside this shift towards *fusionism*, vocal criticism against the increasing role of the Military in the decision-making process has appeared. One of the most prominent critics has been Samuel P. Huntington, who argued that once the Military reaches the supreme level of the decision-making process while incorporating political aspects into its expertise, it will no longer be able to give an adequate advice on purely military matters. As its advice becomes shaped more and more by domestic and foreign policy considerations, military realities fall prey to individual political interests. In this way, Huntington argues, the Military turns into a civilianized institution which is excessively

⁴⁰ Huntington, Samuel P., *Soldier and the State*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1957, p.163

responsive to political considerations and interests of individual players within the decision-making process. The risk that military and civilian aspects will become hopelessly intertwined and the whole decision-making process less effective is just too great.⁴¹

There is yet another perspective from which the trend in the Military's role appears dangerous. In the eyes of some, as the Military becomes more "sensitive to political necessities at the instrumental as well as the administrative level of the policy process, a new organizational pattern emerges. The bureaucratic character of the Military becomes emphasized. Military officers gradually redefine their role and come to see themselves as managers of resources."⁴² The critics further explain that as the military and political aspects become intertwined throughout the decision-making process the Military takes on operational behavior of a large-scale governmental bureaucracy and its traditional role as a war-fighting organization recedes. To critics of *fusionism* the convergence of political and military considerations harms both, the civilian part of the decision-making process as well as the traditional effective functioning of the Military. According to an influential civilian strategist, Edward Luttwak, "the conflict between civilian efficiency and military effectiveness runs right down the organization. Conflict is different from civilian authority, and leadership in war is totally different from management. Our people are managers in uniform. Actually, the American armed forces are very efficient, they just aren't very effective."⁴³

Total versus limited war concept

Historically, American war experience has been unique to a great extent. For most of its history, at least up until the Cold War, the United States engaged predominantly in conflicts that we would now label as *total*. The War of Independence, the Civil War, the World War I and II were all conflicts with a clear and unquestionable goal – a total victory over the enemy which then had to agree to the victor's terms unconditionally.

⁴¹ Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, p.163

⁴² Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998, p.191

⁴³ Edward N. Luttwak, "a critical view of the u.s. military establishment," *Forbes*, May 26 1980, p.38

The pattern of events leading to the military engagement was simple. When a hostile power had begun to threaten vital American interests and all non-coercive methods of settling the disputes failed, the case was handed over to the Military. The armed forces then had almost a free hand in most strategic decisions as long as they conformed to the sole goal of diverting the threat and defeating the enemy. Thus when the Civil War erupted, from the very onset, President Lincoln made the decision to achieve the reunification by arms and would not have approved ceasefire until the Southern forces were decimated and their leadership forced to surrender. That explains why, when everything depended on the battlefield results, General Grant enjoyed so much power not only during war-fighting but also when his forces administered subdued Southern territories. The same applied to Pershing and Eisenhower during both world wars. The conclusion had been reached that there would not be peace until the Central Powers and later on the Axis were defeated and the Military had thus been vested with the responsibility to achieve the goal with all means at hand. Throughout the war itself there would be no attempts to settle to a compromise – a partial victory, the war would thus be truly *total*.⁴⁴

Justification of America going into a war on the part of the civilian leadership has always been based less on practical aspects than on moral principles. Moral values upheld by the American political system are all *total* in nature, therefore, when the Government portrayed the unfolding conflict as a struggle between the good and evil, it is no surprise that the war was perceived to be *total* as well. As a result, the war was in fact a single magnificent effort by the entire society, which devoted the bulk of its economic products to the common goal and entrusted the Military to be its extended arm.⁴⁵

An obvious turning point came during the first years of the Cold War when political and economic implications of military actions were simply too great, and even though the struggle against the Soviet Union was again portrayed as a great crusade against evil

⁴⁴ Huntington, Samuel P., *Soldier and the State*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1957

⁴⁵ see Proxmire, William, *Blank Check for the Military, Readings in the Military-Industrial Complex*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1972, pp.46-65

forces, there was an apparent need to settle to less-than-total, or in other words *partial* achievements.

Instantly, such a shift brought a great turmoil into the traditional understanding of the role of the Military in the decision-making process and during conflicts. When the Korean conflict broke out in 1950, the decision was reached that American forces stationed in the Far East were to be used to drive the Communist forces back beyond the demarcation line. After North Korean forces were stopped near Pusan and decimated in the wake of the Allied landing in the enemy's rear near Inchon, the Military command in Korea led by General MacArthur did not think twice before crossing the demarcation line in order to pursue the Communist forces in the North. In the traditional understanding of war – as a *total* conflict waged until the enemy's forces surrendered unconditionally, it was a logical thing to do, however, politically such a move had far-reaching consequences, which the Military was unable or unwilling to acknowledge. Both, the Soviet Union and Communist China, were greatly alarmed by MacArthur's drive northwards and when he approached the Yalu River, Chinese "volunteers" crossed the borders and attacked exposed American forces.

MacArthur's response to the menace was logical and conformed with the traditional concept of the war. He reasoned that since China had entered the war on the side of the enemy, it is now necessary to annihilate not only remaining North Korean forces but break the back of the Chinese army as well, even if it meant to employ nuclear weapons.⁴⁶ At that particular point, it became clear to President Truman that the traditional role of the Military has to change so that it does not produce an even greater global conflict. Truman realized that in the context of the nuclear age and bipolar world, *total* wars are no longer bearable for the American society. Only *partial* objectives would from now on be attainable. He substituted MacArthur with Ridgeway, who, in Truman's eyes, better understood the implications of the military action, and introduced greater civilian control over the course of military campaigns.

⁴⁶ Kissinger, Henry A., *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, New York, Council on Foreign Relations, Harper and Brothers, 1957, pp.43-54

As a result, the Military lost one of its greatest privileges in the decision-making process; that of the free hand after the conflict erupted. Before as well as during the war itself, military and political matters must go hand in hand so that maximum effect is achieved. During the Vietnam War, unfortunately, the new concept of *partial* objectives contributed to the general deterioration of civilian-military cooperation and to the eventual failure of American forces to curb the Communist aggression. Though capable of destroying North Vietnamese forces by its superior weaponry, the U.S. Military had to accept the limits imposed by the political leadership and resort merely to small-scale campaigns. It is widely accepted that the U.S. forces would have been able to drive back the regular North Vietnamese army had it not been for the interference of the civilian authorities, especially the hostile Congress.

Generally speaking, the new concept of *partial* objectives in conflicts has become an integral part of the foreign policy process and effectively introduced civilian oversight into the course of military action. Conflicts of the past decades only confirmed the trend. One of the reasons the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 introduced the direct access of the field commander to the President, as the supreme commander, was the attempt on the part of the legislators to provide for a clear line of civilian oversight of the main strategic decisions on the battlefield, as these could have far-reaching political consequences. How far such a manicured war-fighting could go was demonstrated during the first Gulf War of 1991⁴⁷ when general Schwarzkopf coordinated day-to-day campaigns directly with the President Bush and the National Security Council. Since the objective was not to destroy Saddam Hussein forces completely and change the Baghdad regime, the fine line had to be found where exactly to stop the armies and whether to engage in the Shiite and Kurdish uprisings which erupted shortly after the Allied forces routed Iraqi army in Kuwait and Southern Iraq.⁴⁸

The need to find a compromise so that a *partial* objective could be achieved has had a detrimental effect on the Military's role in the decision-making process. *Total* objectives

⁴⁷ Hutchings, Robert L., *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War*, Washington, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, pp.342-343

⁴⁸ Collins, Joseph, *Desert Storms and the Lessons of Learning*, The U.S. Army War College Quarterly, Autumn 1992, pp.83-95

of the past assured *total* resources committed and thus virtually *total* power granted to the Military. However, in the world which emerged from the World War II where even a small engagement could produce either a catastrophic nuclear showdown or a protracted and costly conflict of the Indochina kind, the political leadership asserted its power and introduced mechanisms that prevent generals and individual commanders from pursuing partial objectives in conflict with the overall strategy set by the Government. The post-Cold War era will hardly bring an about-face in this trend. Even though the unipolar world gives better assurances against nuclear conflicts, the human and material cost of the conflicts in which America engaged was closely scrutinized by media and the public and the need to carefully pursue individual objectives in foreign policy has thus not evaporated. In fact, given the power of the media and the public opinion, which is directly projected on the Capitol Hill, quite otherwise.

Planning, programming and budgeting

Individual processes within the foreign policy decision-making are often extremely complex and thus cloud the real influence of individual actors. Policy planning, programming and budgeting is one of the most effective way through which the Military exerts its influence upon the decision-making process since it provides crucial expertise for the policymakers who then establish priorities and attach budgetary resources to them. Defense planning has become a complicated matter as the advancing technology and rising costs of weapon systems produced greater demand on effectiveness.⁴⁹

In the presence of a clear enemy, rising costs of military programs and the general upkeep of armed forces are justified on the grounds of national security objectives, in the peacetime, however, planning, programming and budgeting has to conform with high demands on organization efficiency and effective allocation of resources. During the Cold War, when the Soviet threat was looming, the Military had much easier position vis-à-vis the civilian authorities as it always emphasized the link between individual defense

⁴⁹ Bingham, Jonathan B., *Can Military Spending Be Controlled? Readings in the Military-Industrial Complex*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1972, pp.269-285

budget items and basic pillars of national security. In the times, when the prospects of a renewed global conflict were relatively high, military advice had been central for the establishment of budgetary priorities by civilian policymakers.

figure 4 The PPB System

After the World War II, the defense budget was reduced from \$81.6 billion in 1945 to \$13.1 billion in 1950. Such a sharp reduction of resources allocated to the Military gravely affected the role of the armed forces within the foreign policy process. The Military had been used to virtually unlimited funding through which it expanded its defense programs and retained firm grip on a large share of the federal budget. The Truman administration reduced the military budget significantly and with it also the bulk of the Military power over the decision-making system. As a result, defense planning performed by the Military was at odds with budgetary priorities of the Truman cabinet. While in the first years of the Cold War, the U.S. armed forces were planning to establish the line of defense on the Rhine, the budgetary constrains did not even allow the Military to retain the lines of communication in the Mediterranean.⁵⁰

Before the Korean War, the power of the armed forces within the foreign policy process greatly deteriorated not only due to the limited resources allocated to defense

⁵⁰ Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998, p200

items, but also thanks to inadequate coordination of budgetary priorities of individual armed services. Had the U.S. armed forces acted in the budgetary process as a monolithic body, they would have wielded much greater power, however, as the Navy, Air Force and the Army planned and developed their own weapon programs and established conflicting priorities, the Military could not effectively push for larger spending allocated to the armed forces. The National Security Act of 1947 established some level of coordination between individual services' priorities and policies, however, neither the Joint Chiefs of Staff nor the Secretary of Defense had enough leverage to effectively distill joint interests.⁵¹ Thus the three services continued to push for their own priorities and lobbied on the federal level for their respective weapon programs. And even though the military issues as such were crucial for foreign policies, internal divisions within the Military prevented Pentagon from wielding more power over the decision-making process.

Nevertheless, even individual services found ways of projecting their influence over the federal budget and thus over the decision-making process. Since in the 1950s, the budgetary process lasted one year and weapon systems research and development programs lasted much more than that, the Navy, Air Force and the Army all learned to use the so-called "foot in the door" approach, through which they managed to secure substantial funding for their respective weapon programs. In the initial phase, they received comparatively limited funds, but as the research and development advanced they asked for more and more finances and since they always linked successful employment of these programs with national security of the United States, they mostly succeeded in receiving the budgetary increases. Such a strategy led, for instance, to the situation in the early 1960s when the Navy, Air Force as well as the Army developed their own ballistic missile systems, even though their potential use clearly overlapped and funding spent on their development could have been used much more effectively.

⁵¹ Huntington, Samuel P., *Soldier and the State*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1957, pp.374-400

The basic problem was that individual services placed their demands with no respect for budgetary constraints and overall national security objectives. In the situation when the decision-makers were faced with excessive demands by the Military and limited funding, they made arbitrary budgetary cuts with no reference to the potential contribution of weapon systems to the national security objectives. Therefore, there was a huge gap between mission objectives and realistic military expenditures. And when basic demands of the Military on weapon programs were not satisfied, it is clear that it was rather difficult for the divided Pentagon to influence the foreign policy process.

A significant change came with the Secretary of Defense McNamara under President Kennedy. He aimed to introduce such a planning and budgetary system that would allow the policymakers to link military objectives with appropriate budgetary items and over an extended period of time, not just on a yearly basis. McNamara based his reforms on criticism of numerous analysts of the 1950s "who had observed that national planning required an evaluation of alternative methods of accomplishing security objectives on the basis of the comparative outputs and costs of each alternative."⁵² For instance, various strategic weapon systems, such as strategic bombers, Polaris missile submarines and Minuteman missiles contributed to the objective of deterring a nuclear attack by providing the U.S. forces a second strike capability, i.e. the ability to launch a nuclear response even after the United States were hit. The decision how much resources would be allocated to individual weapon systems would from now on be made on the basis of evaluation of all the programs simultaneously. Applying such a strategy would provide for effective distribution of resources and effective fulfillment of national security objectives.

McNamara also introduced what later became a pillar of the Military's influence over the planning, programming and budgeting system – the Future Years Defense Program or FYDP. The FYDP, which currently covers eight years (the past budgetary year, the current one and six following years), shows detail costs and material requirements divided into mission-oriented programs. Even though McNamara centralized the power

⁵² Jordan, Amos; Taylor, William J.; Mazarr, Michael J.; *American National Security*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998 p.202

over the planning, programming and budgetary process in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in other words a civilian authority, the fact that from the 1960s onwards the Military engaged in the budgetary process as a more unified entity gave it a much bigger leverage in the decision-making process. Individual services limited their mutual rivalries and, even though they were still far from coordinating their priorities, wielded much more power in the decision-making process.

The influence of the Military over the planning, programming and budgeting system rests on the scheme that works in two-year cycles. Individual phases of this system are affected by the military advice and expertise and the Military's interests are thus projected in the foreign policy process. In the first phase, the National Security Council drafts a National Security Strategy in which objectives of individual departments and agencies (State Department, Department of Defense, Commerce Department or Central Intelligence Agency) are reflected. The NSS is then reviewed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and a National Military Strategy is produced. In the NMS, the three services lay out their individual priorities in relative concert and formulate joint objectives. The fact that at this point the Navy, Air Force and the Army are forced to accommodate their demands gives the Military much bigger leverage later on in the process. When the NMS is drafted, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff makes a recommendation which is then reflected in the Defense Planning Guidance. At this point, usually achieved within first 10 months of the new fiscal year, the planning phase is more or less completed.

The second phase, the programming process, begins with each individual service outlining program objectives in the so-called Program Objective Memoranda. At that point the Office of the Secretary of Defense reviews the individual memoranda in concert with the chairman of JCS and the Program Decision Memoranda is produced. By that time we are already in the middle of the second year. In the last six months of the PPBS, each individual service submits a budget estimate or BES and the OSD assembles a final Program Budget Decision, which is the actual draft of the Defense budget for that particular year.

From the process described above it is clear that apart from the FYDP the armed forces and their proxies in the JCS could on numerous occasions influence the PPBS process. As a result, the Military acts as a more uniformed institution and can, therefore, lobby more intensively and effectively.

Influence of the Military beyond the process

At certain points in the U.S. foreign policy history, the Military's voice was heard with high intensity. Apart from the official channels through which the armed forces could exert their influence over the decision-making process, there are various "unofficial" ways of achieving their particular goals.

First of all, the Military is an extremely prestigious institution in the American society and ideas and opinions of military officers, therefore, wield considerable gravity in the public opinion. Key foreign policy decisions are usually made in concert with the American public. There never was a major foreign policy step that would not have had substantial support of American citizens. During a crisis, before any course is set by the policymakers, serving or veteran military officers are usually consulted and their position is then usually reflected by the politicians in the Government.

The high number of veteran military officers that set on a political career or even run for presidency proves how prestigious the Military is in the society. Theodore Roosevelt or Dwight Eisenhower are just the most striking examples of how a war hero made his way to the White House and brought the Military perspective right to the center of the decision-making process, at least indirectly.⁵³ For instance, the WW II hero general, Douglas MacArthur, could rely on substantial support of the U.S. public during the Korea War and the Truman administration had to take that fact into account when it decided to sack the rebellious commander and replace him with the more obedient Mathew Ridgeway.⁵⁴

⁵³ Hofstadter, Richard, *The American Political Tradition*, New York, Random House, 1973, pp.265-307

⁵⁴ Huntington, Samuel P., *Soldier and the State*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1957, pp.374-400

Even in current political setting we could find various examples of the trend. Senators Kerry or McCain, both of whom have served in the armed forces with distinction, wield considerable power over the decision-making process and expand the influence of the Military. Then of-course there is the role of individual figures from within the Military in the decision-making process. Over the last half a century there have been numerous personalities with access to the highest levels of the Government. Collin Powell in the early 1990s or Wesley Clark towards the end of the decade both had substantial say in the foreign policy affairs and their advice was directly reflected in the course the Bush and Clinton administrations decided to take. General Powell's reluctance to prolong the military engagement in Iraq and drive North towards Baghdad because of his fear from the chaos that would ensue was a crucial factor in the President Bush's decision not to pursue Saddam Hussein's forces and rely on the sanction regime instead. In General Clark's case, his expertise on the power of the air campaign against Serbian installations in Kosovo was central to President Clinton's decision to start the war even though the consensus among NATO members on the use of the land forces had not been reached by that point.

In order to capture the key elements of the decision-making process, it is essential to assess not only the constitutional structure of the Government related to the United States foreign relations, but also the trends and concepts that have occurred over the course of history and shaped the foreign policy processes. The United States Government with all of its institutions and agencies is not a static entity and does not function independently of the conditions into which it is set, apart from the official distribution of power, decision-making products thus reflect the evolution occurring in the relations between individual institutions and within such institutions themselves, momentary position of the United States in international relations and the role of personalities involved in the process.

Only such an approach could lead to a proper identification of the role of the Military in the whole process, which is the true aim of the thesis. There are particular examples of

how the Pentagon managed to project its power into a specific foreign policy, but none of these instances could be generalized, as such a projection was a product of momentary distribution of power and conditions. The only generalization that could be made relates to the foreign policy process as such; there exist various segments of the process that are, under certain circumstances, susceptible to the influence of the Military, and if the Pentagon manages to overcome its internal rivalries and divisions, it stands a reasonable chance that its views and interests will be included in the foreign policy products.

The role of individual actors described above is the essential point of departure in the description of the decision-making process. More than the official distribution of power itself, it is necessary to capture the evolution of the relations and trends that have occurred under the surface. Examination of the various concepts of the Military's role in the process thus helps us understand what the scope of the influence of the armed forces really was and which segments of the decision-making were so penetrated.

The assessment of the different concepts has not aimed at arguing that the Pentagon has managed to monopolize the foreign policy means and processes, but rather it has aspired to reveal the individual channels through which the position of the armed forces in individual issues was projected.

Unlike the foreign policy *input* discussed in the first part of the study, the decision-making process is much more concrete and its individual segments more specific. Nevertheless, the influence of the Military could be felt in this phase as well. True, foreign policy prioritizing is almost exclusively limited to policymakers, but policy planning and resource allocation, not any less important in the process, are both substantially susceptible to the Military's influence.

CHAPTER III

Interpretation and foreign policy execution

Even though the decision-making process could proceed without the Military making a mark upon it, the Government has to rely on its foreign policy executioners to carry out

the agreed upon measures. If a certain policy originates in Washington, before it reaches the "end-receivers" or in other words the individual institutions, offices and people responsible for carrying out the governmental orders, it is highly possible that the order is modified as every level to which the responsibility is delegated interprets the decision in slightly different way. Even if at every such a step the policy is taken over with 90% accuracy, which is still rather optimistic, after several relays the eventual steps taken constitute less than half of what the executive initially intended.

We might argue that the way the system works influences the resulting policies to a great extend. The more the system is centralized the more accurate the policy execution eventually is. On the other hand, rigid systems tend to suppress low-level initiative which is the only true remedy against degeneration and corruption. The loosely coordinated system, however, tends to be very resentful to the power centers and in general, it is close to impossible for the Government to institute reforms or carry out individual policies with high accuracy.

It is often tempting for the Administration to bypass existing channels of communication and policy execution, and rely on *ad hoc* means, such as special task forces or minor agencies that under ordinary circumstances do not conduct such steps. These tendencies could, however, work only to a very limited extend, as it is impossible for the Government to ignore the established system for a longer period.

The Military is foreign policy tool which could certainly not be substituted. Even an administration which does not have warm relationship with the armed forces establishment has to respect the fact that the global superpower's position rests on the superiority of its Military. Most foreign policy matters are resolved without resorting to the military means, however, in general, diplomacy and coercive means are not separable items. Foreign policy of every nation is a combination of incentives and punishments. The one cannot live without the other, since bringing just "carrots" is seen as a sign of weakness, while resorting only to the power of "sticks" incites feelings of arrogance and tyranny. Thus even when the Administration does not intend to use coercive methods, it cannot rule them out in advance as so doing would undermine its

negotiating position. Obviously, this does not fully apply to dealing with friendly states and allies, on the other hand, even the relative military strength could be a factor in the way the United States is perceived and respected by its foreign policy partners.

Foreign policy credibility of a nation consists not only of the power itself but also of the willingness to use such a power. In other words, the fact that the country possesses great amounts of weaponry does not make it a world power, if it is not willing to employ such hard power in practice. The case of the European Union in world politics is telling. Even though when combined the European forces would amount to a respectable army, it has taken the EU more than 7 years now to fulfill the target 60.000-strong joint force.⁵⁵ Israel, on the other hand, is the exact opposite. Always willing to strike at its enemies even abroad, Israel has been highly respected even by much larger and stronger players in the Middle East and in the world. For this reason, the role the Military plays in the policy execution phase is a crucial element in foreign relations of the United States. The knowledge that the Military is capable of achieving the desirable goal, in combination with the will on the part of the policymakers to resort to coercive measures, once other diplomatic activities have failed, is the only true path to effective American foreign policy.

When it comes to the use of military threats or actual war-waging, only rarely is the Military given a set of clear guidelines of how to act under different circumstances. Usually, the initial decision to resort to armed forces does count on a desirable goal to be achieved or at least some sort of an exit strategy, but more often than not the conditions change along the way and so does the mission of the Military. As a result, the strategy is frequently modified and adjusted to the unfolding circumstances. Under the pressure of the Congress, the public, party or allied powers, the President and the cabinet is often forced to act, and when peaceful measures fail, the only remaining option is to use the Military. After the attacks of September 11, the President was expected to act and to act quickly first of all. When the Taliban regime refused to get rid of the Al-Qaeda bases located on the Afghan territory, President Bush had to order in the Military to do the

⁵⁵ Jonathan Stevenson, *How America and Europe Defend Themselves*, Foreign Affairs, Mar/Apr2003

job.⁵⁶ The limited time he had, the enormous expectations of the public, coupled with the pressure from the Republican Congress, resulted into a military campaign that had not been properly planned, at least the phase that would ensue after the Taliban forces were routed. Thus it was pretty much up to the Military and its true capabilities whether the United States would be satisfied with just chasing away the remnants of Al-Qaeda network and pacifying the Taliban forces or whether America would engage in the post-war reconstruction of the territory as well. Before the conflict, most analysts predicted a protracted conflict with mass casualties on the American side and hardly no-one could imagine a new and stable regime being installed in Kabul. Due to the superior quality of the U.S. armed forces and the speed with which they managed to conquer most of the Afghan provinces, the mission shifted considerably. The vague order the Pentagon received from the White House in the fall of 2001 was gradually transformed into a concrete and complex pacification and reconstruction effort put into practice not only by the armed forces of the United States, but also those of its allies and partners and numerous international institutions. The lesson of the Afghan campaign was that because the Military performed so well, its competences and functions snowballed and the U.S. foreign policy could achieve more than it was anticipated.⁵⁷ The Administration gave the Military a free hand in numerous decisions, since, seen from Washington, it was not clear whether the proposed alternatives were viable or not. It is clear that such a shift would not have materialized had it not been for the role the Military played in the process.

Another crucial part of the foreign policy process related to its execution is monitoring and reporting. Every policy when it is put to practice must be properly evaluated and adjusted if needed, since this is the only way the policymakers can learn whether the direction they chose is feasible or not. Providers of such a feed-back are usually those that execute the policies as they are the once that first encounter the consequences of the course of action. In practice, diplomats first see what the reactions of their

⁵⁶ Stephen Biddle, *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare*, Foreign Affairs, Mar/Apr2003, p31

⁵⁷ Dobbins, James, *Nation Building, The Inescapable Responsibility of the World's Only Superpower*, RAND Corp., October 2003

counterparts are and whether the negotiations stand a chance of succeeding. On the battlefield, it is the Military that provides the first-hand information about the feasibility of a certain goal. In both cases, the policy itself is influenced by the way the executioners evaluate its results, since such a feed-back has a direct influence on the potential modification of the policy by the policymakers. For instance, if the perception of the U.S. negotiators in the talks over the North Korean nuclear program is that Kim Chong Il uses the talks only as a way of diverting attention from his real intentions, then Washington will probably change the course and adopt alternative measures. In the same way, if commanders of the U.S. armed forces in Iraq feel that resentment of the rebels is growing and the attacks are mounting, the White House will certainly get less ambitious in drawing up the post-war political map of the Middle East.

The usual perception is that once a policy is decided upon, it is only a question of time before it is fully put into practice. However, it depends largely on the system and the level of its centralization in the first place. If it works very loosely, then we could expect a dynamic entity with substantial low-level initiative but which is difficult to manage. Should we have a highly centralized system, it would be much easier to induce to a certain action, on the other hand, it would tend to be rather rigid and often corrupt. Either way the system is run, the executioners of the foreign policy play an important role as their interpretation of the measures to be taken could substantially differ from the original intentions of the policymakers. Vaguely defined foreign policy missions then often even increase such a role as they leave a lot of space for the executioners to maneuver between several options. And the last but not least, as the diplomatic corps and armed forces are the ones that provide feed-back on the chosen foreign policy, they could effectively influence the way such a policy is modified.

CHAPTER IV

The Case Study

The position of the Military in the foreign policy process could best be demonstrated in the context of a specific issue that has been in the center of attention for an extensive period of time. The relations of America with Iran and the wider Persian Gulf area represent a typical example of how foreign policy works in practice; from the initial phase – the *input*, through the decision-making to the actual policy execution.

The United States has been present in the area at least since the World War II and has on numerous occasions recognized the importance of the region for the American foreign policy objectives – including the free flow of relatively cheap oil, preservation of stable and friendly governments, limiting the spread of weapons of mass destruction⁵⁸ and, recently, stemming the growth of terrorist activities that spread into the neighboring areas.⁵⁹ Pursuing these objectives Washington has various foreign policy tools at its disposal, however, given the importance and the relative volatility of the region, the bulk of the interests have to be backed by armed forces. Throughout the last few decades, the United States engaged militarily in the region and even during more peaceful periods it kept large military presence in the Gulf, including the Sixth Fleet. That shows that the Military has always been a key component of the American foreign policy towards the greater Middle Eastern area.

Relations with Iran evolved from partnership and alliance with the Pahlavi regime, through outright hostility during the early days of the ayatollahs, to the current cold war with the conservative Ahmadinedjad government. At the moment, there are numerous security threats emanating from the policies of Tehran to which the United States has to respond.⁶⁰ Considering different policy options, the executive will certainly be influenced by the advice and expertise of the Military, by the force and base structure of the U.S. armed forces and overall situation in international relations. All segments of the U.S.

⁵⁸ Cohen, William, *Proliferation: Threat and Response*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1997

⁵⁹ Armitage, Richard L., *U.S. Policy and Iran*, Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC October 28, 2003

⁶⁰ Armitage, Richard L., *U.S. Policy and Iran*, Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC October 28, 2003

foreign policy, the *input*, decision-making and execution will thus be susceptible to the Military's influence. The case study does not aspire to prove that the Pentagon will take charge of the policy towards Iran, but to show in perspective in which ways and to what extent such an influence will be felt.

Historical review of the key turning points in the U.S.-Iran relations with an emphasis on the military aspects.

Since 1940s the U.S.-Iran relations have been shaped predominantly by two basic factors: Iran's strategic position in the Middle East and its natural resources, namely oil. Overt as well as covert political, economic or military actions undertaken by American representatives always reflected one of these two constants. Over the time, emphasis of the U.S. foreign policy evolved, but even today in American foreign policy we could trace both, the recognition of the fact that Iran has tremendous strategic importance in the regional balance of power, and the interest in the Gulf area as the primary source of oil for world economy.

During the World War II, Persia, now called Iran, was a strategic transit point for American and British supply lines to the embattled Soviet Union. In order to prevent Moscow from crumbling, the Allies simply had to keep Germans from dominating the Middle East.

Shortly after 1945, Iran attracted the attention of the former WW II allies again. Soviet troops refused to abandon the Northwestern Iran and incited creation of secessionist movements of Azeris and Kurds. Americans, and especially Brits who had been an active player in the region for decades, realized quick enough that Soviet influence in the area could imply far-reaching consequences not only for the Shah government in Tehran but for the entire region, starting with Turkey and ending with India. To let the Soviets in the Middle East area would have jeopardized security of that part of the world and tipped the global balance in Moscow's favor. As a result of the 1945-46 crisis, the Joint Chief of Staff sponsored a National Security Council resolution of

1947 that found that Iran had become "a major strategic interest to the United States."⁶¹ That is why Washington and London cheered the return of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi after the rebellious and openly anti-Western prime-minister Mossadeq was deposed with a significant help of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1953.⁶²

The primary threat to regional security in the 1950s came from Soviet arms shipments to Iraq, following the 1958 coup in Baghdad, which in turn provoked U.S. involvement in the regional pact known as Central Treaty Organization in 1959, whose other members, namely the United Kingdom, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, committed their forces to contain the Soviet threat emanating from Baghdad and later on from Damascus and Cairo.⁶³ The Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations both stressed economic development and social reform rather than military strength as the key to Iran's future security, however, the global struggle against Moscow made the U.S. military presence indispensable for the regional balance of power, especially after the British forces evacuated their last garrison in 1968.

By 1970, more than 700 defense personnel were in Iran. Over objections of the Department of Defense, president Nixon and his national security adviser Kissinger granted the Shah unlimited access to the most modern American military equipment, like F-14 and F-15 fighters. Between 1972 and 1979 American arms sales reached \$16.2 billion as Iran's defense budget rose by 680%. This increase of military cooperation brought more than 30,000 Americans to Iran, ultimately provoking the nationalist movement and the 1979 revolution that did away with the Shah pro-Western regime.

With respect to the supplies of oil to the West prior to 1979, how important oil from Persia was proved during the first oil crisis of 1974, when Iran increased its oil production in response to the OPEC embargo on supplies to the USA, the Netherlands and Israel, preventing the respective economies from slipping into a deeper depression.⁶⁴ The "loss"

⁶¹ The Oxford Companion to American Military History, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999 p.340

⁶² Kissinger, Henry A., *Diplomacy*, New York, Simon and Schuster, p.524

⁶³ Kissinger, Henry A., *Diplomacy*, New York, Simon and Schuster, p.527

⁶⁴ Pollack, Gerald A., *The Year of Economics: The Economic Consequences of the Energy Crisis*, Foreign Affairs, April 1974

of Tehran in 1978-79 was one of the reasons that contributed to the worldwide economic crisis after 1979.

"The 1979 revolution transformed Iran from a pillar of U.S. policy and what then-President Jimmy Carter called "an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world" into one of the leading threats to the regional status quo and the international system."⁶⁵ Almost overnight the United States lost an ally that had been in the center of its strategic calculations in the area and whose absence contributed to various security challenges that appeared in the 1980s. These challenges were presented not only by Iranian forces proper, but also, for the first time, by Tehran's terrorist proxies organized by Hezbollah in Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia.⁶⁶

Given the nature of regime of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, threats to the regional and U.S. security became more complex. In the 1980s, the fear still was that a single hostile power would come to dominate the strategic region of the Middle East, but Washington also realized that should Iran manage to destabilize the area through its involvement in various terrorist attacks, regional security would be jeopardized. Iran's ambassador to Syria in the early 1980s, Ali Akhbar Mohtashemi, served as the main intermediary between Tehran and Hezbollah, which became the main threat not only to Israel, but also for U.S. forces, an example of which is the 1983 Lebanon bombings of Marines barracks and the U.S embassy. It became clear that following the 444-day hostage crisis of 1979-80, Iran would not refrain from any tactics that would rid the Middle East of American forces altogether. The scale of the danger was revealed even more so when the Operation Eagle Claw of April 24, 1980, aimed at rescuing the hostages held in Tehran ended in disaster leaving eight Americans dead.

Thus when the Iraq-Iran conflict widened, it was a welcomed relief for Washington. Throughout the 1980s Iraq played the role of a shield against Tehran's ambitions and at the same time Iran provided the same kind of security check against rising ambitions of Saddam Hussein of Baghdad. The U.S. forces resorted only to what was later called

⁶⁵ Maloney, Suzanne, *America and Iran: From Containment to Coexistence*, Policy Brief, Brookings, August 2001

⁶⁶ Lugar, Richard, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Opening Statement for Hearing on, *Iran – Security Threats and U.S. Foreign Policy*, October 28, 2003

“offshore balancing,”⁶⁷ whose main aim was to prevent either from dominating the battlefield. In 1986, Iran focused its attacks on Kuwait and Kuwaiti-bound ships in the Gulf in the logical strife to cut off supplies to Iraq and its trade with the West. “American policy had by then tilted toward Iraqi victory.”⁶⁸ To protect the flow of oil from Iranian attacks American forces began escorting tankers in the Gulf. Gradually, U.S. Navy amassed 17 vessels and openly fought several sea battles with Iranian forces. When the conflict with Iraq ended in 1988, hostilities between Iran and the United States ended.

During the Gulf War of 1991, Iran remained neutral. When the Iranian leadership changed after Khomeini’s death, some thaw did occur in relations between Tehran and Washington. Even though Iran continued to sponsor terrorist groups all over the Middle East and undermined U.S. peace efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the new President Rafsanjani provided some sorts of assurance that another round of overt hostilities would not occur. The problem was, nevertheless, that Iranian security forces and intelligence had a decentralized leadership with individual power centers having different objectives. Therefore, it U.S. policy towards Iran over the 1990s proved rather frustrating. Every time there was a sign of relief and a chance to renew diplomatic ties, an openly provocative act occurred on the Iranian part. The Clinton Administration in general went reasonably far with its effort to normalize relations with Iran, however, it was forced to scale back the campaign once it was revealed that Iran played a significant role not only in the bombing of the Israeli embassy and a Jewish community center in Argentina in 1992 and 1994, but, more importantly, in the Khobar Tower attack of 1996 which left many Americans dead. As a result, a major breakthrough in U.S.-Iranian relations never materialized, neither under president Rafsanjani nor Khatami.

It seemed that the attacks of 9/11 would do the job and bring U.S. and Iranian representatives to a negotiation table. Some even argued that after Tehran pledged

⁶⁷ Pollack, Kenneth, *Taking on Tehran*, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2005

⁶⁸ *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, p.340

\$560m for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, practical cooperation would get under way. Conflicting interests within Iranian security forces and the nature of the policy against terrorism put forward by President Bush effectively ended any prospect for a real thaw.⁶⁹ The Axis of Evil speech of 2002 openly articulated why Iran represents a threat for U.S. interests in the region and what steps it needs to take in order to be erased from the list.

The security dilemma with Tehran is threefold. First of all, it represents a threat for stability in Iraq, as Iran enjoys relatively significant influence upon Iraqi Shiite organizations. Up to the invasion of Iraq by Allied forces in 2003, Iraq served as a security check against Tehran's ambitions. With Saddam Hussein gone, Iran no longer has a rival in the region which could counterbalance its rising ambitions.

Secondly, there has been the Iranian nuclear program. The prospect of Iran armed with nuclear weapons represents a major upset of the regional balance of power, therefore as such it is not acceptable for Washington or the West in general. Though Tehran argues it would use nuclear power only for peaceful or defensive purposes, the Bush Administration fears Tehran, under the new radical president Ahmadinejad, would become much more aggressive towards individual states in the region.

The last but not least is the support Tehran provides for regional terrorist organizations and the way it attempts to subvert governments of other regional countries. Probably the most significant is the Iranian support of Hezbollah in Syria and Lebanon, through which it aspires to destabilize the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.⁷⁰ How significant the role could be was proved when in 2002 a cargo ship named *Karine A* heading for the Gaza harbor was stopped and it was discovered that it carries large amount of weaponry of Iranian origin.

As the Iranian nuclear program advances, the question of Israel's security becomes much more complex. Should Tehran acquire a capability to hit Israel with nuclear weapons, a major upset would occur in the Middle East. Israel would lose its relative

⁶⁹ *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, The White House, February 2003

⁷⁰ DeSutter, Paula A., *Iranian WMD and Support of Terrorism*, Testimony Before the U.S.-Israeli Joint Parliamentary Committee, Washington, DC, September 17, 2003

invulnerability, which it now enjoys due to its possession of nuclear arsenal as well as supreme conventional weaponry, and it is beyond dispute that Israeli forces would attempt to prevent such a situation. Though it would most likely not be so straight forward as in 1981 when Israel destroyed a nuclear reactor in Osirak in Saddam Hussein's Iraq,⁷¹ a major crisis would certainly develop, which in turn would draw in the United States as the guarantor of regional security, primarily that of its principal ally – Israel.

If we assess U.S. interests in the Gulf region at large, we arrive at a conclusion that the primary goal of Washington is to secure a free and stable flow of oil into the world markets. The principal threat for the United States is not that gas might cost \$4 at a pump or that Chevron or Exxon might lose a local contract to Lukoil or Total as innumerable conspiracy theories want to prove, but that the world economy, that has been built up on the free and stable flow of oil throughout the last 50 years, would lose its principal energy resource and collapse as a result. The United States imports less than 15% of oil from the Gulf region, so should a crisis occur there, it might still rely on other sources. However, its principal trading partners – Europe and Japan rely on Middle Eastern oil much more heavily and would thus be hit more painfully. Sudden loss of oil supplies from the Gulf would produce a world crisis that would be as deep and lengthy as the Great Depression of the 1930s.⁷² Such a global downturn would eventually hit the U.S. as well.

Securing the free flow of oil is, nevertheless, only one side of the coin. The other is to prevent any hostile power from gaining control over the region. Oil aside, the geostrategical location of the Gulf secures the United States access to some turbulent critical areas of the world, such as Central Asia, Southeast Asia or Eastern Africa. A bulk of the operations in the Afghan campaign of 2001 were managed from U.S. bases in the Gulf area.⁷³ Radical Iran after 1979 proved to be an aggressive power and there is a

⁷¹ Kissinger, Henry A., *Diplomacy*, New York, Simon and Schuster, p.528

⁷² Pollack, Kenneth, *Taking on Tehran*, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2005

⁷³ The Department of Defense, *Base Structure Report*, 2003

well-founded belief that once it puts its hands on nuclear weapons its policies will lose additional restraints, as happened with Pakistan and the Kashmir region in the 1990s.

The role of the Military in the U.S. policy towards Iran

The case of Iran in the U.S. foreign policy is one of the most complicated issues in modern American history. And it became so less because of practical issues than because of prejudices and emotions that dominate relations of the two countries throughout the last twenty-five years. Perception of Washington's foreign policy moves and intentions is what really counts in Tehran and vice versa. Analyzing the roots of the U.S. approach towards Iran it is thus necessary to pay special attention to ideological factors, as these arguably have more significant impact on the formation of Washington's foreign policy. And as the U.S. armed forces have played a critical role in the contest with the radical regime, in numerous cases we could trace the influence of the Military in real depth.

The significance of Iran for the U.S. foreign policy is threefold;⁷⁴ first of all, the Tehran regime wields considerable power over the Shiite elements in Iraq and is, therefore, a potentially strong destabilizing factor in the critical region of the Middle East. Secondly, in the U.S. as well as global politics Iran's nuclear program has been a highly contentious issue which also has the potential to send the entire region into turmoil and drive a wedge between key world powers. And thirdly, the ayatollahs have been known for supporting regional organizations and terrorists that destabilize governments in the entire Gulf region and could produce a shift within the regional balance of power in the U.S. disfavor and disrupt supplies of oil into the American and world economy.

The current situation of Iraq from the Military's perspective is rather paradoxical. After the Iraq-Iran war, Baghdad was in a position to dominate the entire region, as the main land and air forces of its principal adversary - Iran had been destroyed. The invasion of Kuwait and threatening of Saudi Arabia before the Allies acted is a proof of the point. Without a stabilizing power, the Gulf region was thrown into misbalance. As a

⁷⁴ Pollack, Kenneth, *Securing the Gulf*, Foreign Affairs, July/August 2003

result the Allied forces had to restore the equilibrium by eliminating the bulk of Saddam's offensive capabilities. However, by holding the Iraqis down by the combination of economic sanctions and isolation, Washington unintentionally allowed the Tehran regime to restore some of its power, most importantly, its nuclear program. By invading Iraq and getting rid of Baathist regime completely and thus creating a power vacuum on the Euphrates, the U.S. presented a window of opportunity to Iran. Even though it is now surrounded by U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, U.S. Navy in the Gulf and America's ally Pakistan, Iran is in a strong position to influence events throughout the region.

The basis of Tehran's power is its rapidly advancing nuclear program. The conservatives at power feel threatened by the U.S. campaigns in its neighborhood and see the nuclear capability as the only way out of its security dilemma. Its rhetoric is, predictably, aimed at diluting the threat and gain support of some key powers, especially in the U.N. Security Council. The painful question is not whether Tehran wants to put its hands on atomic weapons, but once it acquires them, whether it will become less or more aggressive towards its neighbors. The lesson with Pakistan is that it definitely did increase the lust for power in Islamabad and tempted it to exacerbate tensions with India in the Kashmir region. How will Iran behave is an open question.

Then of-course, there is the proliferation issue. When the Tehran regime has been able to arm various terrorist groups throughout the region, why would it stop short of providing them with weapons of mass destruction if it felt they could enhance its position in the Gulf area?⁷⁵ And what would the reaction of Israel be, if its principal enemy which has on various occasions declared the intention to destroy the Jewish state, acquired the means that could wipe it off the Middle Eastern map? Tehran would then have both, nuclear warheads and the means to deliver them thousands of miles away.

Iran's conventional army is still weak to set on to an adventure across the Arabian Peninsula or into the Gulf waters and it will remain to be so for some time to come, nevertheless, Tehran's forces could attempt to hit at the most exposed place – the Strait of Hormuz and shut down the vital tanker traffic. Even though there are numerous

⁷⁵ *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, The White House, February 2003

American naval units guarding the spot, they could not prevent Iranian army from selecting the place and time of a surprise attack. The only way to remove such a threat would be to eliminate such a capability, but that would mean either an invasion of Iranian territory or a large scale bombing, both of which are very unlikely at the moment.

Most Middle Eastern experts argue, that a revolution or a coup d'état is likely in some of the Gulf states in the foreseeable future. Domestic tensions and disturbances combined with organized terror from abroad could produce a deadly potion for several Persian Gulf regimes and therefore, subversive activities by Iran could pose a serious threat to vital U.S. interests.

The U.S. Military is a critical component of the U.S. foreign policy in the Gulf region. Primarily, because it is the main element of the American presence in the area and at the same time, the principal guarantor of the regional security. For both of these reasons it is no surprise that Pentagon perceives potential threats posed by individual countries in the area through the prism of their military capability. Political, economic and military aspects are not entirely separable and they all affect regional matters in comparable way, but with more than 150.000 U.S. troops present in the area and unstable regimes armed with weapons of mass destruction disseminating terrorism throughout the world it is no doubt the military aspect wins most attention.

A lot is at stake for the U.S. foreign policy in the Gulf region.⁷⁶ Stabilization of Afghanistan and Iraq, protection of friendly regimes, securing of the free flow of oil and, generally, retainment of critical bases in the area for the projection of American forces in turbulent parts of Asia. Since it is the Military that is the principle U.S. foreign policy tool, American armed forces have to be ready to contain any kind of threat that would have the potential to endanger the goals listed above. Therefore, it is the worst case scenario the U.S. Military has to plan for.

Relative stability in the region is the most critical aspect.⁷⁷ Observation of military capabilities of regional powers and trends in their policies is, therefore, the key to the

⁷⁶ *National Security Strategy*, The White House, September 2002

⁷⁷ *Iran: Time for a New Approach*, Report of an Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Robert M. Gates, Co-Chairs, July 2004

prevention of any potential upset. The most competent institution with the ability to assess the gravity of dangers is, logically, the Military. Should the fine balance be overturned, the policymakers would receive the information from the Military. Evaluation of the local adversaries' capabilities is thus a way through which the armed forces and military advisers in general could affect the foreign policy process.

At the moment, Iran does not possess a military capability with which it could seriously endanger American forces located in the Gulf area. However, in order to upset the stability, Iran would need to do much less than that. Iranian army, often suffering from shortages of supplies of critical components to its existing weapon systems, is certainly not able to project its power beyond the Iranian borders for an extended period of time, but strategic location in the Gulf region, Tehran's ties to Russia and China, its import of advanced missile systems from North Korea all significantly improve Iran's position vis-à-vis Washington and its allies.

There are three ways for the Tehran regime to hit hard at the American interests in the area. Firstly, Iranian forces could launch a missile loaded with nuclear (also chemical or biological) warhead against larger accumulation of U.S. forces or, more likely, simply display their nuclear capability and threaten to use it if Americans do not comply with certain demands. The United States would then have to either cave in or launch a preventive strike at Iranian nuclear facilities. Starting yet another war in the area, no matter against whom, would be difficult to sustain for the U.S. Government as the domestic support for foreign military adventures is currently very low and Washington would probably find no ally for such an undertaking. Furthermore, invasion of Iranian territory is very unlikely, since the country is several times larger than Iraq, some of its parts, mainly mountainous, are difficult to control and, most importantly, at the moment, American forces are stretched thin in Iraq and Afghanistan and there would thus not be enough divisions to control the whole country. In general, we might also add that even though the population is much less fanatical than the conservatives at power, overall resentment against the invader could be expected.

Then of-course, Iran could activate its proxies and try to destabilize the situation in Iraq.⁷⁸ Supplying rebels beyond its borders has proved rather smooth in the past and, therefore, should the regime decide to hit in this way, substantial damage to U.S. interests could be expected. Iranian conventional army is certainly no match for U.S. forces, but its naval capability combined with advanced land-to-water missile technology deployed by the shores of the Persian Gulf could be a factor in any clash with the U.S. Sixth Fleet. Should such a naval contest materialize, it is clear that the tanker traffic, so critical for the world economy, would suffer as a result.

Because the current stability could so easily be upset by Iranians, the Military has to scrutinize all developments in the Tehran's armed forces. And if there occurs a major breakthrough in Iran's military capability, like its possession of nuclear warheads, such a development will have tremendous political consequences. For that reason the assessment by the Military is critical for the entire U.S. foreign policy process.

We could certainly argue that after the experience in Iraq, American policymakers will be much less eager to engage in protracted military campaigns, much less so in the kind of reconstruction efforts in the midst of sustained rebel attacks that have been under way since 2003 and which have claimed more than 2000 American lives in the process.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the primacy of U.S. military capability produces an over-reliance on coercive means on the part of the U.S. Government. It is doubtful whether the current Republican administration is any quicker in using the Military in foreign policy than the preceding Clinton cabinet. The general trend, confirmed by the Kosovo, Afghan and Iraq campaigns, is that since the U.S. Military could be relied upon under most circumstances and easily defeats any adversary, policymakers tend not to use up the full potential of non-coercive means and go straight away to the military option. And to slip into that trap with Iran could be rather dangerous. I am not convinced that the Military itself would welcome the conflict with Tehran, in fact most would argue the opposite, but the

⁷⁸ Cheney, Richard, *Speech to the Republican National Convention*, New York, N.Y., September 1, 2004

⁷⁹ James Dobbins, *Next Steps in Iraq and Beyond*, Testimony presented before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, on September 23, 2003

technological dominance of the U.S. forces could *de facto* increase the probability of an armed clash.

We have established that the assessment of threats performed by the Military is a crucial lead for U.S. policymakers. In the Chapter 2, it has also been explained why the armed forces and military advisers are rather slow in changing their view of individual adversaries and dangers they pose. The case of Iran is quite telling. The experience with Tehran is that it *already* tried to undermine local U.S. military establishment and harm Washington's interests. The ayatollahs fought a cross-border war with Iraq, attacked U.S. Government facilities in Iran and elsewhere, tried to interrupt the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz and armed and financed various terrorist groups abroad which have since targeted various American allies. Once the experience is there, the military assessment will be very slow to change, even less so when the rhetoric of the new President Ahmadinejad is much more aggressive than that of his predecessors. Military capability of any country consists not only of the military capability itself, but also of the willingness of the respective regime to use such a power. Iran wields both, the capability and the willingness, and therefore, credibility of the threat it poses is ranked very high by the Military. And such a postulation is in turn projected in the steps policymakers decide to take.

U.S. foreign policy has traditionally been very supportive of Israel. At least since President Nixon ordered massive supplies to the Jewish state during and after the Yom-Kippur war, American politicians have been very sensitive to threats to Israel's security.⁸⁰ Iran has been the principal enemy of the state of Israel ever since 1979. Up to now, the only way Iran could hit the American ally was through its proxies in Syrian and Lebanese Hezbollah. However, should Tehran acquire the capability to launch a missile strike, albeit armed with WMD, serious consequences would result.⁸¹ Either Iran actually strikes at Israel and seriously tips the regional balance of power or, faced with the threat of virtual annihilation, Israel launches a preventive strike at Iran's military facilities. In both cases,

⁸⁰ Kissinger, Henry A., *Years of Upheaval*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1982, pp.504-507

⁸¹ Bolton, John, *The New World After Iraq: The Continuing Threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, Remarks to the Bruges Group, London, United Kingdom, October 30, 2003

American security interests will be at stake. Presence of these threats increases the reliance of U.S. policymakers on the Military, as the most potent means of American foreign policy in the area. Even though the decisions themselves are taken by policymakers, the fact that the main threat to U.S. interests is of military nature, increases the actual influence of the U.S. Military over the foreign policy process.

Force projection is another significant regional factor. The Gulf area's proximity to numerous turbulent areas of the world, like the Middle East, Central Asia, or the Eastern Africa, turns the American military presence in the area into a valuable asset for the U.S. global posture. The very fact that the Military has thousands of troops located there has a great effect on the U.S. foreign policy decision-making. Should a crisis erupt, one of the criteria for the choice of measures to be taken is whether the U.S. forces could actually be deployed in that particular spot within a reasonable time frame. If a base is located nearby, one of the options that are instantly at hand then is to use the Military. The role of the armed forces is strengthened as a result. It obviously were the policymakers who decided to put the base there in the first place, but that does not disqualify the notion that the more military options you have the more say the Military has over what you do and how you do that.

The lesson of Iraq is that once you decide to invade a country and remove its regime, your military has to be well prepared not just for the fighting itself, but, more importantly, for what comes after the major clashes are over, i.e. the pacification and reconstruction effort. Pentagon certainly underestimated the scope of the job ahead of the U.S. forces. As a result, the armed forces were ill-trained and ill-equipped for what awaited them. Unintentionally and, one must say quite unwillingly, the armed forces got engaged in the reconstruction effort as well. Dealing with local authorities, settling disputes between individual religious and ethnic groups, handling humanitarian aid, repairing basic infrastructure and many other jobs became a day-to-day employment of the U.S. forces. Gradually, the mission of the U.S. Army changed completely, even

though the initial plans did not include such an alternative. As the Army engaged more in the reconstruction effort, its influence over the entire political process increased. Intentionally or not, the U.S. Military became a major factor of the U.S. foreign policy towards the area.

The argument over the true role of the Military will probably go on forever, however, it is essential to realize a general trend that the Iraqi as well as the Afghan campaigns revealed. In both cases, the initial plan turned into something that was not envisioned at all. In the case of Iraq, the armed forces were to hand over the bulk of the responsibility to the locals. Afghanistan should have been the same case, instead, however, the U.S. forces are still engaged in the reconstruction effort and there still are substantial forces running around the mountainous regions and hunting down the remains of Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

With respect to the two cases, we might say that a significant “mission creep” occurred. In the initial phase, the policymakers did not envision the Military’s role to be so broad and complex, but over the time, as the events on the ground gained their own momentum and overtook the policymakers, the Military presented the only feasible way of saving the day and securing American interests in the area. It made no difference to what extent the Military itself approved of such a development, what really mattered was that it became clear that the armed forces are a reliable means of the last resort.

Even though the Bush administration has tried hard to retain initiative in pacification of the area, engaged in the local political renaissance, invested tens of billions of dollars into the ruined economy and did its best to woo in allies from all over the world,⁸² its policies have become largely reactive – meaning that since Washington has not been able to anticipate most of the political and military developments in the area, it is often forced to seek *ad hoc* solutions to arising problems. And since the most reliable asset the Bush team has on the ground are the U.S. troops, it has been quick to relay more and more

⁸² *Report on Allied Contributions to the Common Defense*, A Report to the United States Congress by the Secretary of Defense, July 2003

competences to the Military in the hope that, even in the absence of adequate training and equipment, the armed forces will manage to succeed.

The same development could be expected with respect to Iran as well. As it has been explained earlier, the Gulf area has, apart from huge amassment of weapons, extremely rich concentration of religious, ethnic and political grievances. Should military confrontation between American armed forces and Iran erupt, we could expect a wave of unrest in the greater Middle East.⁸³ Tehran will definitely try to widen the conflict by trying to encourage solidarity among regional Muslims. The easiest way of doing so is through bringing Israel into the conflict, thus provoking anti-Semitic instincts in Islamic countries. Generally anti-Western sentiments of the majority of Muslims in the area could result into a wave of direct attacks on political, economic and, obviously, military facilities of the United States and its allies. When that moment comes, American policymakers will have to rely on the armed forces to safeguard basic security. Apart from the fighting itself, it is very likely that the Military will also be in charge of protecting allied regimes in the region, preventing large scale clashes between individual religious and ethnic groups, safeguarding tanker traffic in the Gulf and continue the reconstruction effort in Iraq and Afghanistan. All in all, the Military will be the key institution of the American foreign policy and thus its role in the whole process will dramatically increase.

More than individual examples of the Pentagon's influence it is central to assess the United States foreign policy towards the Gulf region as a whole. Rather than to draw conclusions from specific cases, we should consider the question in its complexity and focus not only on the decision-making but also on the foreign policy *input* and execution related to the greater Middle East, all of which will be under the influence of the Pentagon. The case of the American foreign policy towards Tehran is a typical example of the interaction of various actors within the foreign policy process and clearly illustrates that, even though the armed forces are not dominant in this matter, they play a substantial role indeed.

⁸³ Powell, Colin L., *Interview by The Washington Post*, Washington, DC, October 3, 2003

Conclusion

Putting the pieces together; evaluating the role of the Military as a whole

In the midst of the American military engagement in Iraq, Afghanistan and the escalating crisis with the Iranian regime, arguments are often raised that the Military has acquired too much power over the U.S. foreign policy. More than 100.000 troops on the ground and the mounting casualties in the war on terror frequently give the outside spectators a feeling that the foreign policy is only about the armed forces and furthermore, that the Military has a free hand in most important issues. The treatment of Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Graib facility or the random raids on the terrorist havens that produce civilian casualties, all fully exposed in the media, often leave the impression that the Pentagon is the true ruler of Iraq. Arguments of the sort go even further and claim that the very decision to go to Afghanistan and Iraq and to commence the whole campaign was made predominantly in the halls of Pentagon, or at least that the “hawkish” wing of the White House had eventually its way.

However, the fact that the U.S. military presence in the greater Middle East is significant and will not decrease in the near future does not prove that the U.S. Military is the determining factor in the foreign policy related to the region. Armed forces on the ground do have a room for their own initiatives, but that does not mean the uniformed officers take decisions related to the strategic issues or priorities of the American foreign policy as such. The military campaigns are thoroughly scrutinized by a wide range of observers, including the media and the Congress, which often creates an impression that the armed forces lie in the very center of the U.S. strategy. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that there appear so many voices calling for a greater civilian control over the Military.

All these secondary issues cloak the true substance of the matter. American foreign policy does contain a fairly strong military element - that we must admit, on the other hand, the real influence of the armed forces is projected not so much in the decision-

figure 5 Foreign policy actors

making process, but rather the initial phase – the foreign policy *input*. The decision-making and execution phases are certainly not free of the Military's influence, but here it is much more subtle and relatively limited. However, none of these areas where the Military does play a certain role should be evaluated separately, for the picture would only be one-dimensional. In order to provide a valuable assessment of the role of the armed forces in the American foreign policy, we need to evaluate the influence of the Military as a whole, in other words, to show the way in which it interacts with other actors and processes, and which segments in particular are susceptible to the influence. Only then could we arrive at valid conclusions.

The role of the Military starts much earlier than most realize. Foreign policy of any nation works off the information submitted by people, institutions and agencies that interact with the outside world. These information *receptors* not only relay information to the system, but also filter and interpret the issues in their own distinct ways. One such *receptor* is the U.S. Military as it is deployed in various areas of the prime U.S. interest and is relatively often used to foster the American foreign policy objectives. As has been

explained, the fact that the U.S. armed forces are deployed in such high concentration in the neighborhood of the potential adversary – Iran, provides the Pentagon with a potent means of influencing the policy-making process. The main concern of the White House is that Tehran will lay its hands on nuclear weapons and thus throw the entire region into misbalance, or that it will continue to spread the instability by supplying the local terrorist groups with weapons and cash.⁸⁴ For this reason, individual steps of the Tehran government will be perceived through the prism of security – especially armaments, technology, delivery systems and deployments.⁸⁵ In the assessment of these areas the Military's expertise will thus be essential and it will inevitably depend much on the impressions of the Pentagon which way the U.S. policy will eventually go. It is certainly not to say that the foreign policy will be at the Military's mercy, but rather that there are objective factors augmenting the role of the armed forces in the whole process.

The decision-making phase as such is firmly in the hands of the civilian institutions, just like in any other developed democratic country. Nevertheless, even in the second segment there are several channels through which the influence of the Military could indeed be felt. First of all, individual actors in the foreign policy process interact and the resulting policy is always some sort of a compromise between various views and interests. In this respect, the armed forces often play a significant role. Secondly, the circumstances, under which the U.S. foreign policy functions, evolve and so does the role of the Military. There are various trends that work in the Military's favor, like the fact that the *fusionist* concept has managed to gain ground in the executive, and also those that work against it, as it has been explained in the passage related to the *limited* war objectives. The civil-military relationship changes and so does the "balance of power" between them, if we can use that expression. Thus if we want to draw conclusions related to the Pentagon's role in the decision-making phase we must consider not only the official hierarchy stemming from the Constitution but also the trends and conditions into which the individual foreign policy matters are set.

⁸⁴ Robert I. Rotberg, *Failed States in a World of Terror*, Foreign Affairs, Jul/Aug2002, p127

⁸⁵ *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, The White House, February 2003

The fact that a decision is made does not mean that its result will necessarily conform to the policy objectives. Policymakers often tend to assume that their will is automatically projected into what comes out of the whole foreign policy process. Execution of individual decisions is as much important as the decisions themselves, for the people, institutions and agencies charged with carrying out the policies in practice interpret the decisions in their own particular ways and therefore, the results often do not match the expectations. No foreign policy decisions could ever anticipate all potential developments and circumstances, the less so other countries' steps and reactions, and for this reason, there always is some room left for the foreign policy executioners to improvise and thus leave their mark on the whole process. The decision to topple the Saddam Hussein's regime was a political decision taken by the civilian Bush cabinet. Military advice did certainly play role in that decision, however, the role of the armed forces was secondary. While on the ground, however, the U.S. troops were faced with a different kind of situation than was envisaged in the strategy put forward by the White House. Suddenly, the Military was expected not only to hunt down the elusive rebels, but virtually to run the entire country as well for there was no local civilian authority.⁸⁶ The pre-war plans did not provide many guidelines for such circumstances and therefore, the Military had large room for *ad hoc* decision-making. It was not the intention to let the armed forces be in charge of this huge country, but the situation has evolved in the way that the role of the Pentagon has grown enormously. The lesson of Iraq is that even if a foreign policy decision is purely civilian, once the planning phase is neglected, the situation gets out of hand and the gap has to be filled by the foreign policy executioners, whose concepts and ideas do not always conform to the initial intentions of the policymakers.

The case of the U.S. foreign policy towards Iran shows how complex the factors influencing a particular foreign policy could be. Even though the current conflict with Iran over its nuclear program threatens to lead to an open military engagement that could produce major regional and potentially global instability, the matter is certainly not limited to the question of the U.S. Military's capabilities. The media as well as foreign

⁸⁶ Ochmanek, David, *Military Operations against Terrorist Groups Abroad*, RAND Corp, December 2003

policy experts often speculate about the military options, however, there are much more factors involved in the process. And should we aspire to decipher the role of the Military in this process, we need to evaluate it as a whole and contrast it to that of the other actors.

The question of the civil-military relationship is as old as the system of government of the American republic itself. A French philosopher, Alexis de Tocqueville, who dedicated much of his life studying the nuances of the American system, observed that while a democratic society longs for peace, a democratic army prefers the state of war. In order for a democratic system to be stable, a firm civilian control over the armed forces has to be established. Revealing the role of the Military within such a system we thus need to presume that its power could never be decisive. If we have a look under the cover of the civilian authority, however, we discover that its influence is widespread and should definitely not be underestimated.

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