



Beyond Gunboat Diplomacy

Forceful Applications of Airpower in Peace Enforcement Operations

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Abstract

Military intervention short of full scale war is not a new phenomena as a means of pursuing national interests. With the end of the cold war, military intervention has taken a new twist in the form of peace operations. The United States Air Force (USAF) in particular is being used as a tool of national policy in peace enforcement operations with increasing regularity. The USAF was involved in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and maintained an air presence in both Turkey and Saudi Arabia to control the Iraqi repression of its civilian population. This involvement raised a fundamental question about when and how airpower should be used as an effective coercive force in peace enforcement operations.

Peace enforcement is a military intervention in an ongoing conflict that uses military force to coerce one or more belligerents to comply with mandated restrictions. The purpose of this intervention is to create the proper security conditions such that other peace efforts such as humanitarian relief and diplomatic peacemaking can help the belligerents resolve the conflict without the use of force. This study uses Operation Provide Comfort in northern Iraq and the Unified Task Force/United Nations Operations in Somalia II (UNITAF/UNOSOM II) as case studies to examine how airpower influenced these peace enforcement operations.

The primary conclusion of this study is that airpower, as a pervasive element of combat operations, will have an important impact on any peace enforcement operation. Strong, centrally controlled air forces serve to assert escalation dominance at the higher end of the conflict spectrum. They can also provide a coercive force that can threaten to escalate the fighting beyond peace enforcement on short notice. However, in almost all cases tactical aviation and special operations aircraft will be critical to support or protect ground forces and help control violence at the lower end of the spectrum. Peace enforcement operations are likely to succeed only when airpower is combined with dominant ground forces and strong diplomacy. Finally, peace enforcement is a complicated affair, perhaps even more so than war itself. Intangible political factors such as the cohesion of the coalition, its willingness to maintain a long-term commitment to the mission, and its ability to balance restraint against credibility will be the primary determining factors in the efficacy of airpower and the mission as a whole. Airpower alone will rarely offer the possibility of military intervention with limited liability in a peace enforcement operation.

About the Author

Maj James O. Tubbs graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in May 1980. Following graduation he attended the University of Texas at Austin and was awarded a Master of Business Administration degree in December 1981. Major Tubbs then attended undergraduate pilot training and was assigned to the 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron as a forward air controller, flying the O-2A at Shaw Air Force Base (AFB), South Carolina. Major Tubbs was subsequently selected to transition to the F-16C and became a flight commander in the 496th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Hahn Air Base (AB), Germany. He was later assigned to Luke AFB, Arizona, as an F-16C replacement training unit instructor pilot and became the assistant operations officer for the 314th Fighter Squadron. Major Tubbs attended the Army Command and General Staff College and recently graduated from the Air Force School of Advanced Airpower Studies where he was awarded a Master of Airpower Art and Science degree. In July of 1995, Major Tubbs was assigned to the 32d Air Operations Group, Ramstein AB, Germany.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

I believe peacekeeping and humanitarian operations are a given. Likewise our forward presence is a given—to signal our commitment to our allies and to give second thoughts to any disturber of peace. It is in the category of the use of “violent” force that views begin to differ.

—Gen Colin L. Powell

Military interference in the sovereign affairs of other nations short of full-scale war is nothing new in world politics. Defined as “a dictatorial or coercive interference, by an outside party or parties, in the sphere of jurisdiction of a sovereign state, or more broadly of an independent political community,” military intervention has traditionally been considered morally and legally wrong except under rare circumstances.¹ With the end of the cold war, there seems to be an increased willingness to accept military intervention as a means to control internal conflict or the repression of human rights by state governments. A 1993 study listed the following conditions under which military intervention has been acceptable since the end of the cold war:

- Genocide and mass atrocities are in progress. (Yugoslavia, Iraq, Liberia)
- Substantial interference with humanitarian relief. (Yugoslavia, Iraq, Somalia)
- Violations of negotiated cease fire agreements. (Yugoslavia, Liberia, Cambodia)
- Collapse of civil order. (Somalia, Liberia)
- Irregular interruption of democratic governance. (Haiti)²

United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali ushered in a broader concept of international peace operations in 1992 when he published *An Agenda for Peace*.³ In a companion article, he also introduced the idea of peace enforcement units whose purpose would be to “enforce a cease-fire by taking coercive action against either party.”⁴ Since then, the Clinton administration has supported this concept by including multilateral peace operations as an important component of the US national security strategy.⁵ The president has also published a Presidential Decision Directive in which he outlines the conditions under which the United States would use military force in peace operations.

While military intervention in situations short of war has historically been the responsibility of marine and naval forces, the United States has shown an

increased propensity to use airpower as a means of limited intervention.⁶ The USAF was involved in two major peace enforcement operations, Provide Comfort in Iraq and Deny Flight in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Politicians seemed eager to use airpower as a means to enforce UN mandates in Bosnia, they were reluctant to commit US ground forces. As Gen Charles G. Boyd observed, “there is something terribly personal about sending an 18-year-old into combat carrying an M-16. It is another thing—an enormous difference—to send an F-16 to do the job.”⁷ The possibility of success without over commitment seems to make airpower an attractive alternative for US policy makers. This is also precisely the reason that the USAF must come to grips with both the capabilities and limitations of airpower in the politically sensitive realm of peace operations.

The fundamental issue here is when and how airpower can be used as an effective coercive force in peace enforcement operations. The answer to this is context dependent, based on factors such as the objectives pursued and the constraints placed on the use of airpower. A systematic study of some peace enforcement operations will provide some insight into how airpower should be used in future peace enforcement operations and into some of the major factors that influence this decision.

Methodology

This study first lays a theoretical basis for analyzing the problem. The next chapter defines the goals and boundaries of peace operations and identifies the issues associated with the use of military force. It then establishes a framework for analyzing the possible forceful applications of airpower in peace enforcement. The subsequent chapters analyze the role of airpower in two peace enforcement operations, Provide Comfort in Iraq and Unified Task Force/United Nations Operations in Somalia II (UNITAF/UNOSOM II). These cases are unique because they represent opposite poles in peace enforcement operations in which airpower was used in many different ways. Provide Comfort is an example of a successful peace enforcement operation conducted under favorable conditions and using airpower as a primary source of coercive power. Somalia, on the other hand, is an example of difficulties and challenges involved in using airpower in many third world countries.

Each of these case studies is composed of three sections. The first section briefly outlines the historical background of the intervention and highlights the political objectives and reasons for becoming involved. It then briefly describes the overall phases of the military actions taken and the objectives those actions were intended to achieve. The second section looks specifically at airpower and how it was used during each phase of the operation and makes a subjective judgment about the efficacy of airpower in achieving the military and political objectives. The final section looks at three primary sets of factors that influenced the efficacy of airpower.

Nature of the Conflict

This first factor includes the type of combat the intervention intended to control, the types of forces involved in the fighting, the political entities that had to be coerced to control the fighting, the saliency of the issues to those political entities, and the physical environment. The primary issues are how the nature of the conflict influenced the feasibility of using airpower to accomplish the mission.

Political Influences

This second factor includes issues related to the problems of coalition warfare. Specifically, the cohesion and dedication of the coalition (its political will), the willingness to use force when necessary to achieve the political objectives, and the political lines of authority from political leaders to military commanders are examined to determine how political influences limited or enhanced the efficacy of airpower.

Command and Control

The command and control structure needed for employing airpower in a peace enforcement operation will depend on the nature of the conflict, the types of applications considered, and the political influences. Of primary concern will be the development and implementation of the rules of engagement (ROE). The primary issue here is how the nature of the conflict and political factors affected the operational command and control of airpower.

The final chapter summarizes the findings of the two case studies and draws several conclusions about the role of airpower in peace enforcement operations. First, the primary conclusion of this study is that airpower is a pervasive element of combat operations and will have an important impact on any peace enforcement operation, even under the most adverse circumstances. Strong, centrally controlled air forces serve to assert escalation dominance at the higher end of the conflict spectrum and provide a coercive force that can threaten to escalate the fighting beyond the limits of peace enforcement on short notice. However, tactical aviation and special operations forces will be critical to support ground forces and help them control violence at the lower end of the spectrum. Second, airpower rarely offers the possibility of intervening with limited liability. Peace enforcement operations are likely to succeed only when airpower is combined with sufficiently powerful ground forces and strong diplomacy. Third, peace enforcement is a complicated affair. Intangible political factors such as the cohesion of the coalition, its willingness to maintain a long-term commitment to the mission, and its ability to maintain a balance between credibility and restraint will be the primary determining factors in the efficacy of airpower and the mission as a whole. This casts serious doubt on the ability of the United Nations to act effectively in a peace enforcement environment.

Limitations of the Study

There are two primary factors that limit the ability of this study to draw anything beyond tentative, preliminary conclusions. First, both case studies are recent, with Provide Comfort still an active commitment for the USAF. Thus, there is a limited amount of unclassified, open source data available on which to base the conclusions. The primary evidence to support the conclusions herein comes from periodicals, unclassified histories, and after-action reports and interviews with some of the participants. There is a distinct possibility that some of the inferences drawn may be premature.

The second limitation is that the study only considers the use or threat of lethal force. There are many other nonlethal uses of airpower in peace enforcement such as reconnaissance and tactical mobility that are critical to success and may prove to be more valuable than direct force application. However, they are also generally noncontroversial uses of airpower. As Gen Colin L. Powell stated, it is the issue of the violent use of force that raises the greatest degree of contention, especially in coalition operations.⁸

Notes

1. Hedley Bull, ed., *Intervention in World Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 1.
2. Lori Fisler Damrosch, ed., *Enforcing Restraint: Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 12.
3. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (New York: United Nations, 31 January 1992). Although he did not use the term peace operations, the United States has adopted this term to cover the concepts contained in *An Agenda for Peace*.
4. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Empowering the United Nations," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 5 (Winter 1992-1993): 94.
5. *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, February 1995), 16.
6. Airpower is defined here in broad terms to include any military force which fully exploits the third dimension as a primary means of operations. This includes not only air forces but the tactical aviation arms of the army, navy, and marines as well as guided surface-to-surface missiles.
7. Gen Charles G. Boyd, "The Role of NATO and the United States in Multinational Operations" in N. E. Taylor, ed., *The Role of Air Power in Crisis Management* (St. Andrews: Department of International Relations and the Director of Defence Studies (RAF), September 1993), 23.
8. Gen Colin L. Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 5 (Winter 1992-1993): 36.

Chapter 2

Peace Operations and the Use of Force: Peace Enforcement

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something alien to its nature.

—Carl von Clausewitz
On War

With this idea in mind, this chapter analyzes peace operations and peace enforcement, two subjects that US joint doctrine does not fully cover.¹ Peace enforcement is conducted at the transition point between peace and war, containing elements of both war fighting and peacekeeping. However, peace enforcement is not war. The political and military objectives of war and peace operations are completely different.² Peace enforcement is also not peacekeeping, as the conflict environments of the two are fundamentally different. Confusing peace enforcement with either war fighting or peacekeeping is dangerous and is likely to lead to mission failure.

Finally, peace enforcement is not a stand alone military strategy. Peace enforcement is a subset of peace operations in which military force is used as a tool of coercive diplomacy to terminate an ongoing conflict, implement a cease-fire, or create a secure environment for other elements of peace operations to succeed.

Peace Operations

Emerging US doctrine defines peace operations as “the umbrella term encompassing peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and any other military, paramilitary or nonmilitary action taken in support of a diplomatic peacemaking process.”³ However, nowhere in the doctrine does it define the concept of peace. Where peace operations are concerned, the concept of peace goes far beyond the absence of armed conflict. St. Augustine, as the founder of the just war tradition, developed the idea that true peace is centered on basic human values such as justice, freedom, and human rights.⁴ UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali adds to this, saying that the deepest causes of conflict are economic despair, social injustice, and political oppression.

Healing the source of these conflicts will require both economic and social development.⁵ The implication is that peace operations involve much more than diplomatic and military efforts. They will likely require humanitarian relief and nation building to get at the underlying causes of the conflict and ensure long-term stability.

Violent internal conflicts often represent a threat to the peace under the broad meaning outlined above. In addition to humanitarian tragedy, armed conflicts can also affect regional stability by causing mass refugee migration or threatening wider involvement by regional powers. However, these conflicts will rarely threaten the vital interest of the United States.⁶ The president's policy on peace operations states that while such limited conflicts do not directly threaten American interest, their cumulative effect is still significant. Peace operations are viewed by the current administration as a cost-effective measure to contain or resolve small internal or regional conflicts before they become more costly threats to the national interests.⁷

Because the motivation behind peace operations is limited, the political objectives are also limited. The political objectives of peace operations involve containing small conflicts, alleviating the short-term suffering and external effects caused by these conflicts, and promoting the resolution of the conflict through nonviolent means to achieve long-term regional stability. The political end state of peace operations is reached by establishing a viable political process for conflict resolution while potentially dealing with some of the underlying economic and social causes of the conflict. "Peace operations are conducted to reach a solution by conciliation among the competing parties rather than termination by force."⁸

Peace operations include all efforts, diplomatic, economic, informational, and military, to support the nonviolent resolution of conflicts. They may include short-term efforts to terminate or control an ongoing armed conflict and provide humanitarian relief. They may also include long-term efforts to negotiate political settlements and promote economic and social development. Peace operations are primarily diplomatic and economic affairs. The use of military force will be confined to creating and maintaining a secure environment. "The concept of military victory or defeat is inappropriate in peace operations."⁹ Thus, peace operations are not war. They will not normally require large-scale sustained combat operations nor will the goal be to win a quick or decisive victory.¹⁰ In current US military doctrine, peace operations fall into the category of operations other than war.

Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement

Military forces are likely to support many diplomatic and economic efforts during peace operations. However, there are two primary military functions that may involve the potential use of force: peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Of the two, peacekeeping is generally the more traditional and

less controversial as it does not represent a military intervention in the affairs of a sovereign nation.

Peacekeeping consists of “military or paramilitary operations that are undertaken with the consent of all major belligerents, designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of an existing truce and support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement.”¹¹ The tasks of peacekeepers can range from supervision of cease-fires and buffer zones to helping maintain law and order. However, peacekeeping forces are not used to coerce parties to settle their conflicts. At best they operate as a psychological deterrent with the understanding that an attack of the peacekeeping force is an attack on the international community. In addition, they serve as a confidence-building measure which allows two distrustful parties who are weary of war to stop fighting and attempt a negotiated settlement.¹²

Peacekeeping is commonly recognized as a valuable tool for the United Nations under chapter 6 of the UN Charter, which calls for the peaceful settlement of disputes.¹³ Peacekeepers have generally been successful in stabilizing regional conflicts when they adhere to three key principles. First, peacekeeping forces must not be interventionist forces, but only operate with the full consent of all parties to the dispute. Second, peacekeepers must maintain complete neutrality as a disinterested third party to aid all parties who want to disengage. Finally, peacekeepers will only use force as a last resort, and then only to protect themselves from attack. Thus, the political framework of a cease-fire must already be in place. Peacekeepers cannot create the conditions for their own success. They depend on the cooperation of the belligerents to create a benign, nonhostile environment.¹⁴

Peace enforcement is fundamentally different from peacekeeping. Peace enforcement relies on the application or threat of military force to coerce compliance with resolutions or sanctions.¹⁵ The primary purpose of peace enforcement is to impose a truce or cease-fire on uncooperative parties to create the security conditions needed for other peace operations to succeed. The fundamental difference is that peace enforcement units are much more powerful and are allowed to use lethal force if necessary to ensure the success of their mission in a hostile environment. They can create the security conditions for their own success and do not fully depend on the cooperation of the belligerents.

This fundamental difference violates all the important principles of peacekeeping. Peace enforcement units do not require, nor will they normally have, full consent for their operations. Thus, they will find it difficult to preserve strict neutrality and are likely to face active resistance from one or more of the belligerents. Even an intervening force that symmetrically imposes restraint against all sides is likely to be seen as an enemy by any belligerents that feel they could win significant gains through further combat. Additionally, a side that knows it is benefiting from the intervention may still see the intervening force as going too far to help the enemy. Finally, in some cases it may be necessary to intervene on behalf of a weak, defenseless party to prevent its total annihilation. In this case there will not even be the

appearance of impartiality as the restraint will be applied primarily to one side. Even the simple act of delivering humanitarian aid can be seen as unwanted interference when starvation is used as part of an overall military strategy in modern siege warfare.¹⁶

As opposed to peacekeeping, the legitimacy of peace enforcement missions will likely be challenged. First, peace enforcement limits the sovereignty of a state or the ability of a nonstate faction to gain power. Second, because vital national interests are not at stake, the domestic population may question the propriety of committing combat forces to a peripheral conflict. Finally, the intervening force will need to establish the legality of the intervention to establish international legitimacy. International legality is normally gained pursuant to a UN resolution under chapter 7 of the UN Charter which authorizes “all necessary means” to enforce the resolution.¹⁷ However, a UN resolution is not a guarantee of legitimacy. Unless the conflict in question represents a clear danger to the national interests of the intervening parties or the stability of an important geographic region, peace enforcement is likely to be a controversial undertaking. Winning the political high ground of domestic and international public opinion will be a critical component of peace enforcement.

The military goal of peace enforcement is to establish and maintain a secure environment in which diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian activities can operate with the freedom they need to succeed. Thus, peace enforcement is a means of conflict termination, not conflict resolution.¹⁸ However, peace enforcement is not war. The political objectives are very different and the political sensitivities needed to maintain the legitimacy of the intervention will limit the amount and types of force used. Likewise, peace enforcement is not peacekeeping. It is conducted in a hostile conflict environment in which peacekeeping forces cannot operate. The conflict in Bosnia is a good example of the dangers of placing peacekeepers in the wrong environment. While the ultimate goals of peacekeeping and peace enforcement may be the same, the methods used to achieve them are fundamentally different. Table 1 summarizes the differences.

Peace Enforcement and Coercion Theory

Applying military force in the politically sensitive environment typical of peace enforcement becomes an exercise in coercive diplomacy. Alexander George and William Simons explain that coercive diplomacy attempts to use military force as a diplomatic tool to “persuade an opponent to cease aggression rather than to bludgeon him into stopping.”¹⁹ It is the threat of punishment or military response combined with persuasion and incentives that cause the opponent to comply with the coercing country’s demands. Effective coercive diplomacy may require limited, exemplary actions to make its threats credible. When used, military force should be appropriate to

Table 1
Peacekeeping versus Peace Enforcement

	Peacekeeping	Peace Enforcement
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post conflict • Combatants prefer negotiations • Truce in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War/ongoing combat or conflict • Combatants (at least one) prefer fighting • No truce
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent by belligerents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome and possibly opposed • Some belligerents may need to be coerced to comply/negotiate
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutral forces • Relatively simple • Traditional, good doctrinal foundation • Small, lightly armed forces, defensive orientation, passive and inexpensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely that the peace enforcers will not be seen as neutral by at least one side • Relatively more difficult, may be “too hard to do” compared to interests at stake • No doctrine, controversial • Combat troops with offensive potential and firepower, more robust C², logistics and intel organizations, more expensive
Policy and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally noninflammatory commitment of US forces, even if protracted • Overwhelming force is inappropriate • No vital national interest • No sovereignty issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May become unpopular if protracted, which is likely • Maximum overwhelming use of force may not be appropriate even if required • No vital national interests • Sovereignty of nation may be violated • Little guidance to tell US when to intervene

Source: Donald Snow, *Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peace-enforcement: The U.S. Role in the New International Order* (Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, February 1993), 21–29.

demonstrate resolve and to give credibility to the threat that greater force will be used if necessary to secure compliance. George and Simons also argue that the use of coercive force could go beyond simple coercive diplomacy to include reprisals which punish an opponent for violating certain conditions imposed on him.²⁰ Coercive diplomacy in peace enforcement depends on military force to act as a psychological barrier rather than a true physical barrier.

The idea of coercive diplomacy raises several issues about the use of force. The first is the need to use restraint at all times in the application of force. The purpose of using coercive diplomacy is to achieve the final objective with less cost and bloodshed, less political backlash, and less risk of escalation than would be involved in the use of pure force.²¹ Because vital national interests are seldom at stake in peace operations, excessive use of force that results in collateral damage or excessive casualties is likely to infuriate public opinion and call the international legitimacy of the intervention into question. It can also harden the resistance of the belligerents against the intervening force and lead to further escalation of the conflict. Excessive use of force will almost always be counterproductive in a peace enforcement environment.

However, the excessively restrained use of force may cause the credibility of the intervening force to be questioned by the belligerents. To be a true psychological deterrent, the belligerents must perceive that the intervening force has both the capability and the will to inflict pain or punishment. A strong, swift, and violent response to any violation of the protocols being enforced may be needed to present a credible deterrent threat. However, it could also be seen as a provocative offensive action that risks escalation. Similarly, a restrained, slow, and more controlled response could be interpreted as a sign of good faith. It may also be interpreted as a lack of will. Thus, peace enforcement requires balancing the need for restraint against the need for credibility in the type of military response used to enforce sanctions or agreements.

George and Simons go on to explain that there are four types of objectives related to coercive diplomacy. The first is deterrence, which attempts to persuade an opponent not to do something. The next step is to persuade an opponent to stop an action already in progress short of its intended goal. Third is an attempt to persuade an opponent to undo an action such as giving up territory he has already won or removing his weapons from a ground exclusion zone. Finally, the most demanding objective is to persuade an opponent to make changes in his form of government. These categories represent an ascending scale in terms of their difficulty and the amount of coercion required to achieve them. Deterrence is generally considered the easiest form of coercion as it does not require any positive action by the subject. However, Thomas Schelling argues that when the objectives require compelling an adversary to take positive action the task becomes more difficult. The act of compliance in this case is more conspicuous, more recognizable as a submissive act and therefore more humiliating to the opponent. Thus, threats which require an opponent to take positive actions

generate their own resistance, possibly bringing with them the seeds of their own failure.²²

These same categories can be used as a useful model for examining the employment of airpower in peace enforcement. The most straightforward application of airpower is to enforce the conditions of a cease-fire. In this case, enforcing air exclusion zones may be the easiest task as it only requires deterring the belligerents from flying military aircraft in certain areas.²³ The next step in degree of difficulty is to require a cease-fire in place without giving up territorial gains. Third, carving out ground exclusion zones by forcing belligerents to withdraw from territory they hold or place their weapons in cantonment areas will require even stronger coercion, as it requires one or more of the belligerents to take positive steps to comply. Finally, any demand for a belligerent to permanently disarm or surrender key weapons will represent the most difficult form of coercion in peace enforcement if this threatens its power base. In general, actions taken to establish and implement a cease-fire should be more difficult than actions taken to enforce one once it is in place.

A second use of airpower would be the discrete use of punitive air strikes as a form of reprisal. Here again, it should be easier to use punitive strikes as a show of force intended to deter future violations than to compel positive actions from recalcitrant parties. This brand of coercion will also depend heavily on good intelligence about the opponent and what he values as well as the ability to communicate clearly what is expected. Finally, reprisals represent a much more aggressive and potentially humiliating means of coercion. Thus, theory would predict that punitive strikes of this sort should be used with great restraint.

Another issue to consider is how and when airpower should be integrated with other forces such as ground forces or humanitarian relief forces. The added firepower and psychological influence of aircraft overhead should be especially useful when ground forces are conducting more difficult missions such as forcing compliance with ground exclusion zones. Additionally, the presence of airpower could act as a strong deterrent and protective force for ground forces or humanitarian relief efforts. Here again, one would predict that the stronger forms of coercion will require a closer integration of airpower with the actions of other forces.

Finally, military forces play an important role as reassurance and confidence-building measures. Parties to a conflict may not be willing to comply with demands made of them if they feel their enemies could gain an advantage. The presence of intervening forces could encourage a belligerent to comply by providing the assurance that his opponents will not be allowed to take advantage of the situation or escalate the conflict. Likewise, relief workers and civilians may need the reassuring presence of intervening forces to go about the business of humanitarian relief and nation building. The question is whether airpower alone provides enough physical presence to accomplish this task.

A final benefit of coercion theory is that it predicts many of the difficulties military forces will face in peace enforcement operations. George and Simons conclude that coercive diplomacy is a complicated affair that “will constitute a high-confidence strategy in few cases.”²⁴ They identify a series of contextual factors and conditions, three of which in particular have historically contributed to the success of coercive diplomacy. The first is an asymmetry of motivation that favors the intervening force. The second is a sense of urgency among the intervening forces to gain quick compliance with the resolutions or mandates they are enforcing. The third is a credible and potent threat with the ability and willingness to impose unacceptable costs. Finally, they observe that the intervening forces must have an accurate image of their opponents and the ability to communicate clearly what is expected of them.²⁵

The implication from coercion theory is that political factors, especially the complexities involved with coalition warfare, will significantly influence the efficacy of airpower in peace enforcement operations. In addition, because vital national interests are not at stake, it is unlikely that an intervening power will have an asymmetry of motivation or a sense of urgency that will favor his intervention in an ongoing civil war. Thus, peace enforcement is likely to be a difficult form of military intervention in all but the most favorable conditions.

Notes

1. Joint Pub 3-07, “Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War,” (draft), April 1993. This draft doctrinal manual included only a definition of peace enforcement with no further discussion. The manual has since gone through several updates which have included more guidance on peace operations. The Joint Warfighting Center has published a very good handbook titled Joint Task Force Commander’s Handbook for Peace Operations, 28 February 1995. However, this handbook is not considered doctrinal guidance.

2. For a different opinion see Col William W. Allen, Col Antione D. Johnson, and Col John T. Nelson, “Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement Operations,” *Military Review*, October 1993, 53–61. They argue that Desert Storm and the Korean War were peace enforcement operations. A similar debate occurred in the US doctrine community when both Air Force and Army doctrine writers disagreed with the Joint Staff’s use of these two wars as examples of peace enforcement in the December 1994 draft of Joint Pub 3-07.

3. Joint Pub 3-07, 18 July 1994, GL-6.

4. US Catholic Bishops, “The Just War and Non-Violence Positions,” in Malham M. Wakin, ed., *War, Morality and the Military Profession* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), 239–40.

5. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (New York: United Nations, 31 January 1992), 2, 8.

6. A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, February 1995), 2. Vital interests are defined as the survival, security, and vitality of the nation.

7. The Clinton Administration’s Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations, May 1994, introduction 1-3.

8. Joint Task Force Commanders Handbook for Peace Operations, 28 February 1995, 6.

9. *Ibid.*, 7.

10. Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, 9 September 1993, I-2, I-3. This doctrinal manual has a more detailed description of the differences between war and operations other than war.

11. **Joint Pub 3-07.3, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Peacekeeping Operations, 29 April 1994, I-1.**
12. **William J. Durch and Barry M. Blechman, Keeping the Peace: The United Nations in the Emerging World Order (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, March 1992), 9–10.**
13. **United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) I (1956–1967) and UNEF II (1974–1979) in the Sinai, United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) (1964-present), United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) (1974-present) in the Golan Heights, United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) (1991-present) in Kuwait, and United Nations Transnational Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) (1992–1993) in Cambodia are examples of successful UN peacekeeping operations. Likewise, the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) mission (1979-present) in the Sinai is an example of a successful non-UN peacekeeping operation. See Henry Wiseman, “Peacekeeping: The Dynamics of Future Development,” in Henry Wiseman, ed., *Peacekeeping Appraisals and Proposals* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983), 341–70, for a more detailed discussion of the effectiveness of peacekeeping.**
14. **John Mackinlay, *The Peacekeepers: An Assessment of Peacekeeping Operations at the Arab-Israel Interface* (London: Unwin Hyman Inc., 1989), 14–15.**
15. **Joint Pub 3-07.3, III-17.**
16. **Humanitarian aid has been seen as favoring one or more sides in both Bosnia and Somalia.**
17. **“All necessary means” is the common terminology in UN resolutions to refer to chap. 7, art. 42, of the UN Charter.**
18. **Lt Col Michael R. Rampy, “The Endgame: Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Activities,” *Military Review*, October 1992, 42–54. Lieutenant Colonel Rampy presents a more detailed discussion of the difference between conflict termination and resolution.**
19. **Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 10.**
20. **Ibid.**
21. **Ibid., 9.**
22. **Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966), 82–84.**
23. **Ibid., 77. As Schelling points out, deterring the continuation of an on-going activity has many characteristics of harder, compelling forms of coercion.**
24. **George and Simons, 293.**
25. **Ibid., 267–93.**

Chapter 3

Military Intervention in Iraq: Provide Comfort

Saddam Hussein's repression of the Kurdish insurrection that followed Desert Storm resulted in a humanitarian tragedy that made front page news around the world. The western world's response to this tragedy was Operation Provide Comfort. One of the most successful peace enforcement operations ever, Provide Comfort provided for the humanitarian relief and resettlement of approximately 450,000 Kurdish Refugees.¹ During this operation, airpower played a leading role in enforcing Iraqi compliance with an air and ground security zone for the Kurdish population in northern Iraq.

The roots of the Kurdish insurrection of 1991 can be traced back to 1880 when a Kurdish religious leader first attempted to establish an independent Kurdistan.² Saddam Hussein ruthlessly punished Kurdish dissidence and in 1988 used helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, some delivering chemical weapons, to destroy as many as 4,000 Kurdish villages in retaliation for Kurdish support of Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. While exact casualty figures cannot be confirmed, human rights organizations claim at least 17,000 people were killed and over 30,000 Kurds became permanent refugees in southern Turkey.³

Taking advantage of Saddam Hussein's weakness in the aftermath of Desert Storm, Kurdish leaders once again attempted to establish Kurdish autonomy in northern Iraq. Perhaps spurred by President George Bush's message urging the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam, the Kurdish Peshmerga forces began fighting the Iraqi Army in northern Iraq in early March 1991. By mid-March, Kurdish leaders claimed control of the two major cities in the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq. Over 75 percent of the Kurdish population in Iraq were under their control.⁴ However, Saddam responded aggressively to this new threat. Again using helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, and heavy artillery, and indiscriminately attacking Kurdish civilians, the Iraqi Army overwhelmed the Kurdish rebellion. The Kurds fled northern Iraq to Turkey and Iran to escape Iraqi repression.

The initial US reaction was very restrained. President Bush repeatedly said he would not intervene in Iraq's internal affairs—and that Iraq should maintain its territorial integrity and settle its own internal disputes. Aware of the implications it would have for Turkey, Syria, and Iran, he was firmly against creating a separate Kurdistan. He also worried that a successful rebellion would cause Iraq to disintegrate into a Lebanon-like situation.

American public opinion and congressional pressure in the United States were firmly opposed to intervention—and foreign leaders, including those in the Middle East, did not support intervention.⁵ However, the United States did warn Iraq that US forces would attack any military unit caught using chemical agents against the rebels. In addition, the US-based coalition continued to enforce the Desert Storm cease-fire which totally banned Iraq's flying any fixed-wing military aircraft. US aircraft shot down Iraqi Su-22 fighter-bombers on 20 and 22 March, but this token effort was not enough to prevent the rout of the Kurds.⁶

During the first week of April, the situation changed quickly and dramatically. The plight of the Kurdish refugees fleeing from Saddam's forces became a serious international issue as intense media coverage brought images of starving children to the world. Over one million Kurds fled to the rugged mountains of southern Turkey and Iran while international relief agencies began reporting between 500 and 1,000 deaths per day in Kurdish refugee camps. The Turkish government was overwhelmed by the task of caring for the refugees and was suspicious of Iraqi motives, claiming that Saddam was using the refugees to punish Turkey for its support of the coalition during Desert Storm.⁷ Turkey closed its borders to Kurdish refugees and, on 2 April 1991 Turkish President Ozal asked the UN security council to provide humanitarian aid and help end the repression of Iraqi Kurds.⁸

On 5 April 1991, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 688. The resolution strongly condemned the repression of the Iraqi civilian population, "the consequences of which threaten international peace and security in the region."⁹ Yet Resolution 688 stopped short of authorizing the use of force under chapter 7 of the UN Charter. In fact, it is not clear that the United Nations even contemplated using military force when it debated passage of the resolution.¹⁰ However, as the tragedy in northern Iraq unfolded, it became obvious that only forceful action would alleviate the situation. On 8 April, Secretary of State Baker visited a Kurdish refugee camp and reported the conditions to President Bush. His report, along with increasing pressure from France and the United Kingdom, convinced Bush that a major relief effort was required to avert catastrophe in northern Iraq.¹¹

Military Intervention in Iraq

Once the decision to intervene was made, the United States responded quickly to remedy the humanitarian tragedy. Joint Task Force (JTF) Provide Comfort began as a US operation under the control of the United States European Command (EUCOM). However, US forces were soon joined by those of 12 other coalition partners and by over 50 relief agencies. On 10 April, JTF Provide Comfort was redesignated Combined Task Force (CTF) Provide Comfort (to reflect the multilateral nature of the humanitarian response).¹²

The initial concept of operations called for humanitarian air drops anticipated to last 10 days.¹³ However, it was soon obvious that the large Kurdish refugee population could not be supported in the mountains of southern Turkey. The Turkish government argued that the problem could only be solved by returning the Kurds to Iraq. The other major coalition partners, the United States, United Kingdom, and France, quickly agreed to this proposal. On 10 April, the United States delivered a message to Iraqi diplomats in Washington forbidding any military air activity north of the 36th parallel by fixed-wing aircraft or helicopters, and warned Iraq not to interfere with the relief efforts. Later, on 16 April, President Bush announced that the coalition would establish safe zones for the Kurds in northern Iraq, and protect them with military force if necessary.¹⁴ Thus, although Provide Comfort was intended to be a humanitarian relief effort, coalition forces would be occupying parts of northern Iraq to accomplish their mission.¹⁵

The Iraqi government considered this a challenge to its sovereignty and Saddam vowed to “resist with all means” any attempts to establish safe zones for the Kurds. While Saddam was willing to let UN agencies provide humanitarian relief to the Kurds with UN peacekeepers as guards, he never accepted the coalition intervention or the ground and air security zones that went with it.¹⁶ Iraq denounced the intervention as an interference in its internal affairs, arguing that the United Nations should operate and establish all relief centers in Iraq.¹⁷ Thus, the coalition was unsure what kind of resistance to expect in their attempts to resettle the Kurdish refugees.

The process of creating a ground security zone began when the task force commander, Lt Gen John M. Shalikashvili, met with Iraqi military leaders on 19 April. General Shalikashvili reported that there was very little negotiating during this meeting. He simply told the Iraqis what was expected of them, commenting that “they were either going to let us come in or we were going to push them out bodily. And I think they understood that very well.”¹⁸ Task Force Bravo entered Iraq several days later. Coalition forces gradually expanded the ground security zone over the next three months pushing the Iraqi Army back as they went. Task Force Bravo left Iraq in mid-July, signaling the successful end of Provide Comfort I.

Following the withdrawal of Task Force Bravo, much of the responsibility for the long-term resettlement of the Kurdish population fell to the United Nations. However, a reshaped CTF Provide Comfort II stayed in place to ensure a secure environment for the Kurds and to prevent another refugee problem. The mission of CTF Provide Comfort today is to deter Iraqi aggression against the Kurds, respond to any threat to the peace, and facilitate the continuing humanitarian relief effort.¹⁹ The primary deterrent forces in place are the aircraft under the control of the Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC). The CTF also consists of a Military Coordination Center (MCC) and a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). The MCC is intended to maintain a direct face-to-face contact with Iraqi military leaders (although the Iraqis have refused to meet with the MCC since February 1993), monitor Iraqi compliance with the ground

exclusion zone, maintain liaison with humanitarian relief agencies, and investigate confrontations between Kurdish and Iraqi forces. The purpose of the JSOTF is to support the MCC, conduct noncombatant evacuation if required, and perform search and rescue for downed airmen.²⁰ Provide Comfort is a unique case of a successful peace enforcement operation in which airpower has provided the primary military force.

Airpower and Provide Comfort

During the early phases of Provide Comfort, the primary force application role of airpower was to protect airlift missions from Iraqi interference. Due to the uncertainty of the Iraqi response, fighter packages flying from Incirlik AB, Turkey, including surface-to-air missile (SAM) suppression aircraft, air superiority fighters, and ground attack fighters, provided cover for the humanitarian airlift.²¹ As the mission expanded, coalition aircraft provided 24-hour CAS coverage for the ground forces as they moved into northern Iraq. The battles that followed were exclusively psychological ones during which “motivational CAS” played a key role. Low-flying fighters would “buzz” the positions of Iraqi units that were reluctant to withdraw or orbit in clear sight of Iraqi forces during negotiations between coalition and Iraqi Army officials.²² The presence of Allied aircraft supporting coalition ground forces was often the key to pushing Iraqi Army units back and avoiding the need for ground combat.

In addition, coalition air forces continued to maintain a coercive presence to deter the Iraqi Air Force from intervening. Air-to-air fighters were on station continually to enforce the air exclusion zone and protect allied forces. In addition, coalition aircraft would conduct mock attacks over potential Iraqi targets, such as the Mosel airfield, that were north of the 36th parallel demarcation line.²³ These missions were primarily a show of force and were used to indicate the coalition’s resolve and willingness to use force if necessary to accomplish its mission.

A final function performed by air forces was to reassure the Kurdish people that it was safe to go home. At first the Kurds were reluctant to return to Iraq because they feared retaliation from Iraqi military forces. Many factors encouraged the refugees to return to Iraq, not the least of which was the presence of coalition aircraft overhead. The Kurds both respected and feared Iraq’s airpower, having often been the victims of air attacks.²⁴ The presence of allied aircraft flying low over Kurdish areas was essential to reassure them that they would be safe from air attack if they returned to Iraq. A Kurdish general was quoted as saying “[we] don’t care how often or how low the United States flies. It is music to our ears. We love you.”²⁵

Provide Comfort II continues to rely on a deterrent air presence which combines the maximum threat of force with the discrete minimum use of force to influence Iraqi behavior. Coalition forces still fly large packages of aircraft

into northern Iraq on a regular basis. They normally include air-to-air sweeps through the no-fly zones, tactical reconnaissance of key target areas, and fighters prepared to respond to any threat. Although not directly related to Provide Comfort, Operation Southern Watch also began in August 1992 in response to Saddam's use of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft to bomb and strafe Shiite factions in southern Iraq.²⁶ Although they operate through different command and control channels, the two operations are complementary and use similar operating procedures. Together, they have served the purpose of controlling much of Iraq's repression of its civilian population and enforcing compliance with UN Resolution 688.

Coalition forces from both Provide Comfort and Southern Watch have used force when necessary to respond to Iraqi aggression. Beginning in late December 1992, Saddam stepped up his defiance of UN resolutions in the belief that the United States would be unlikely to act during the presidential transition. The result was a series of skirmishes that lasted through August 1993. In the end, there were over 20 incidents in which coalition aircraft returned fire on Iraqi SAM or anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) sites that had committed hostile acts.²⁷ In addition, the coalition shot down two Iraqi MiGs violating the northern and southern no-fly zones. Finally, the United States launched two punitive missile strikes. The first was against the Zaafaraniya industrial complex for Iraqi noncompliance with UN mandated inspections of nuclear facilities.²⁸ The second was a punitive attack against the Iraqi Intelligence Headquarters that was involved in a plot to assassinate former President Bush during a trip to Kuwait.²⁹ While not specifically part of Provide Comfort, these strikes made the point that Iraq must comply with UN and coalition mandates.³⁰ The final incident occurred on 19 August when two US F-15Es conducted a punitive strike to destroy a SAM site that had fired on coalition aircraft the previous day.³¹

Following this series of incidents, Iraqi forces in northern Iraq have been significantly silent. In the end, Iraq has never seriously resisted coalition forces on the ground or in the air. The combination of air and ground forces succeeded in coercing a reluctant Iraqi army into withdrawing without a fight. When asked why he thought there was so little resistance, Gen James L. Jamerson, the Deputy Task Force commander, replied "Perhaps because we're prepared for it, or just because we're here."³² Provide Comfort has succeeded in accomplishing the limited mission it was given through a combination of a strong deterrent air presence and the demonstrated resolve to use force when provoked. The reasons for this success are important for understanding the efficacy of airpower in peace enforcement operations.

Nature of the Conflict

The nature of the conflict between Iraq and the Kurdish forces presented many unique opportunities for a successful military intervention with

airpower. First, Iraq was seen as the aggressor. Saddam had already built a reputation as an aggressive leader seeking to expand his power through any means possible, including military force. It was clear that much of the Western world considered him a threat to stability in the region.³³ Thus, while the coalition maintained neutrality regarding the final political settlement of the internal dispute, the military intervention was clearly on the side of the Kurds. This gave military planners a clear and identifiable enemy on which to focus their efforts.

Second, and perhaps most crucial, Iraq was extremely vulnerable following the Gulf War. In addition to the military actions of coalition forces, the United Nations continued to enforce tough economic sanctions and postwar resolutions. Much of Iraq's military defense was destroyed in Desert Storm and Iraq knew that it could not defend itself against outside intervention. Iraq was in no position, politically, economically, or militarily, to put up a strong resistance to coalition demands.

As a relatively modern state, Iraq also presented many strategic options for air planners. For example, Iraq depends on oil and electricity for much of its power, roads and railroads for commerce, and mass communications media such as telephones, radio, and television. Iraq also has a conventional military force with centralized command and intelligence facilities. Any of these targets could potentially be held at risk with punitive air strikes. The CTF Provide Comfort staff has conducted limited contingency planning in the past focused mainly on using attacks against Iraqi military targets to punish potential violations of the exclusion zones or to respond in case of increased fighting.³⁴ However, the attack on the Iraqi central intelligence headquarters in Baghdad and the Zaafaraniya industrial complex are clear indications that other targets are also liable to allied attack if warranted.

The structure of the Iraqi state also makes it easy for coalition forces to communicate their intentions. Iraq has a central government controlled by a dictator whose supreme goal is to remain in control for as long as possible.³⁵ Saddam Hussein, with a few key leaders in the Baathist Party and the military, controls practically all of Iraq's political, economic, and military activity. In addition, Iraq has all of the normal diplomatic channels such as ambassadors and UN representatives who can facilitate negotiations and diplomatic communications. Finally, the Iraqi military is organized around a normal command structure with clear command and control relationships. Having an easily identifiable leadership group with clear lines of communication and a firm grip on the operations of subordinate units allowed the intent of the coalition to be clearly transmitted to the proper authority.

Finally, the nature of the fighting in northern Iraq favored intervention by airpower. The Iraqi Army depended heavily on the firepower of conventional forces, including helicopters and fixed-wing fighters. As an aide to the Kurdish military commander stated, "We cannot deal with ground-to-ground missiles, helicopters, warplanes, and heavy artillery. How can boys and old men stand up to the Republican Guard?"³⁶ However, since coalition forces have stripped the Iraqi Army of its firepower by imposing a no-fly zone, these

“old men and boys” have done very well. Fighting between the Iraqi Army and Kurdish guerrillas has continued sporadically throughout the last four years, with the Kurdish guerrillas holding their own.³⁷

Because the Kurdish population has actively supported the coalition force, the danger of terrorist or unconventional attack is minimal. For example, when the Iraqi Army attempted to infiltrate Kurdish areas by using soldiers disguised as policemen in the city of Zakho during the early stages of their withdrawal in April 1991, Kurdish civilians easily identified and reported them to coalition ground forces who subsequently made them leave.³⁸ The Peshmerga have secured the Kurdish areas, eliminating the need for coalition ground forces and allowing a small contingent of MCC forces to travel without facing widespread violence similar to that in Bosnia or Somalia.

The main threat to the Kurds still comes from massed Iraqi conventional forces. However, these units are also the most vulnerable to air attack. The desert environment and terrain of northern Iraq present few restrictions to air operations and provide little cover or concealment for mechanized forces against air attack. Generally favorable weather conditions present no significant obstacles to air operations and the environment is favorable for employing precision munitions, which are important to minimize collateral damage. Thus, the very forces that Iraq would have to depend on to escalate the violence are the most vulnerable to air attack.

Political Factors and Coalition Warfare

One of the keys to the successful employment of military force in Provide Comfort is the limited military objective the coalition has maintained. The original mission given to CTF Provide Comfort was limited and straightforward: stop the suffering by providing humanitarian relief to Kurdish refugees and then to entice the Kurds to return to their homes in Iraq. Implicit in this mission has been the continuing need to provide a secure environment for the Kurds.³⁹ The coalition has remained focused on this objective, avoiding any efforts to impose a political solution on the problem.⁴⁰ The coalition has neither interfered in fighting between Kurdish and Iraqi forces outside the security zone nor attempted to disarm any of the factions.⁴¹ The military operation has remained limited and is clearly focused on maintaining the security of the Kurdish population in northern Iraq.

A second key to the success of Provide Comfort is that the coalition has retained a strong political resolve to contain Saddam Hussein. Saddam's behavior is still a threat to the stability of an important geo-strategic region. There is still a high probability that without a military presence, Saddam would renew his attacks against the Kurdish population. Saddam has denounced all Kurdish attempts at autonomy, such as the May 1992 elections of an autonomous Kurdish legislature.⁴² Saddam also continues to take indirect aggressive action to punish the Kurds. Since Provide Comfort began,

he has turned off electrical power to Dahuk province and pulled out all Arab civil administrators.⁴³ In addition, the Iraqi Army continues to attack the Shiite population in Southern Iraq with tanks and heavy artillery. There is little doubt that Provide Comfort still has an important role to play in controlling this type of aggression.

The coalition demonstrates its commitment to Provide Comfort by its willingness to use force when necessary. The convincing response to Iraqi resistance in 1993 and 1994 was a clear signal that the coalition would not tolerate such behavior. There has been little negative political reaction within the coalition to the use of force to enforce the mandates of Provide Comfort. The only challenge to the political cohesion of the coalition came in 1993 in response to the punitive missile attacks on the Zaafaraniya industrial complex. While this attack was not related to Provide Comfort or Southern Watch, it elicited negative reactions in both Britain and France. In both cases, the coalition allies were critical of the attacks primarily because of the civilian casualties caused by collateral damage, not because of the targets or nature of the response.⁴⁴ While the response has been limited and proportional to the threat, it has also been forceful enough to stop aggression.

Command and Control

The operational command and control of CTF Provide Comfort, although fraught with many of the pitfalls of coalition warfare, is adequate. The lines of authority between political leaders and military leaders are clearly delineated and military leaders have adequate authority and flexibility to accomplish the mission. Likewise, the centralized control provided by the CFACC is well-suited to the operation. However, political considerations have forced a splintered command and control structure and caused ever-increasing restrictions and friction to the conduct of operations. Thus, even in a well-conceived and strongly supported operation, one cannot escape some of the friction generated by joint and combined operations.

Provide Comfort, as a US-led coalition, has clear political lines of authority. During Provide Comfort I, the CTF commander (General Shalikashvili) received strategic guidance, through EUCOM, from the US National Command Authority (NCA). General Shalikashvili commented in an interview that he was satisfied with his relationship with US political leaders and that he had adequate input into important decisions.⁴⁵ American commanders today still receive most of their strategic guidance through EUCOM, which maintains close military-to-military contacts with other coalition partners through its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) connections. The result has been general agreement between coalition partners on the conduct of military operations.⁴⁶

The rules of engagement (ROE) are a reflection of this political commitment and cohesion. The CTF commander has the flexibility to maintain a balance

between credibility and restraint. Military commanders have adequate authority to use force when necessary without detailed coordination with political authorities. While the ROE provides general guidance, most of the decisions regarding the proper use of force are left to the military commanders. The only exception is the authority to execute preplanned punitive strikes, which remains with the political leadership and requires the coordination and approval of other coalition governments.⁴⁷

The key to enforcing the ROE is determining where decisions to allow the use of force are made. General Jamerson, the initial CTF commander, wanted to stabilize the situation in April 1992 and avoid unnecessarily antagonizing Iraqi forces. Thus, he emphasized restraint by centralizing ROE control. Aircrews could use force without higher approval only when absolutely necessary to protect themselves. Otherwise, they were to report the incident to the command element on the airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft, which would then contact commanders on the ground at Incirlik for authority to engage a target. In general, this command and control structure was sufficient to deal with the threat to coalition forces. The Iraqis were complying with every instruction and the coercive presence of coalition aircraft was enough to ensure compliance. In addition, there were procedures in place to get immediate weapons release authority if needed.⁴⁸

However, as demonstrated by Iraq's massing of ground forces in northern Iraq to threaten the Kurds during the May 1992 elections, the threat to coalition forces could change rapidly.⁴⁹ When Iraq challenged many of the UN's post-war restrictions in 1993, the emphasis of the ROE changed to presenting a credible threat. Aircrews and command elements on the AWACS were given much more authority to respond to Iraqi violations of the no-fly zone or to threats from ground-based defenses.⁵⁰ Iraqi actions in early 1993, which included several Iraqi SAMs fired at coalition aircraft, are evidence that this change in ROE was appropriate.

Today, with a lower level of threat from Iraqi forces, the task force once again emphasizes restraint. In all cases other than self-defense, the CTF commander retains the authority to authorize the use of force.⁵¹ While the ROE has not changed significantly since Provide Comfort began, commanders have the flexibility to determine where in the command chain the decision to use force is made.⁵² This allows the CTF forces to be responsive to changes in the threat situation and to create a balance between credibility and restraint. At the same time, it gives commanders the responsibility to be sensitive to the political ramifications of their actions. This is an important lesson for future peace enforcement operations.

Finally, the operational command and control of coalition airpower is well suited to the task at hand. Provide Comfort used the same air command and control structure used during Proven Force and is heavily dependent on the NATO infrastructure available in Turkey.⁵³ From the very beginning, all air forces (and for most of the operation, Army helicopters) have been centrally controlled by a US commander.⁵⁴ While each member of the coalition maintained its own national command linkages, all save one agreed to allow

the Air Force forces (AFFOR) to exercise tactical control of their forces.⁵⁵ The exception was that German helicopters used during Provide Comfort I, because of German constitutional restrictions, could not fly outside Iraq or be placed under a non-NATO commander. However, they maintained a close liaison with the CTF and closely coordinated all operations with the AFFOR.⁵⁶

This centralized control of air assets is critical to the success of Provide Comfort. It allows central coordination and deconfliction of all friendly air traffic flying into and out of the tactical area of operations. Centralized control is also essential to prevent traffic conflicts and to ensure positive identification and avoid fratricide incidents. And because there are limited resources, centralized allocation of resources is needed to match the right asset with the mission and coordinate the operations of the different services and countries. Finally, the task force needs a highly centralized command structure for airpower to implement centrally controlled rules of engagement.

In addition, the task force commander has the intelligence needed for centralized control. The US co-commander has full access to national intelligence gathering. Because of the continuing focus on Iraq as a regional threat, this provides valuable information about Iraqi movements and intentions. Both the British and French have provided tactical reconnaissance aircraft, which can focus intelligence gathering to fit the needs of the commander. Finally, the Peshmerga provide valuable human intelligence for the MCC, which uses them to keep track of Iraqi troop movements and exclusion zone violations.⁵⁷

However, beginning with Provide Comfort II, CTF command has been shared between US and Turkish co-commanders.⁵⁸ While the political lines of authority for the American commander have remained essentially unchanged, all operations must be fully coordinated with the Turkish commander, who reports directly to the Turkish General Staff. This coordination is not limited to strategic or operational level guidance, but includes coordination down to details of tactical execution. The daily Air Tasking Order (ATO), including the routing of aircraft packages to and from the area of operations, is coordinated through a Turkish Air Force staff agency which approves and then publishes the ATO through the Turkish system. This not only slows down the process, but makes same day changes to the schedule difficult; they must be coordinated back through the Turkish chain of command for approval.⁵⁹ Thus, the Turkish military has coordination authority to approve all Provide Comfort operations.

Additionally, host nation sensitivities have increased restrictions on Provide Comfort operations. The Turkish government both limits the number of aircraft that Provide Comfort can maintain in-country and the time window in which they can fly. Early in Provide Comfort II, coalition forces would fly at random times during the entire day. However, they can now only fly daylight missions. The Turks insist on monitoring the execution of all missions. Each crew aircraft, such as AWACS, must have a Turkish observer on board.

Additionally, there must be a downlink from AWACS to a ground station in Diabikur before any aircraft can enter the area of operations.⁶⁰

Perhaps most important, the Turkish military does not coordinate its own operations with Provide Comfort. There have been several instances when Turkish Air Force fighters have entered the area of operations unannounced and conducted air strikes against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorist targets in southern Turkey. This presents two problems to coalition forces, the first of which is the potential for fratricide or midair collision incidents. Since Turkish fighters do not have the same electronic identification features as coalition fighters they could potentially be mistaken for Iraqi aircraft. The second problem is that the Kurds and the PKK could potentially perceive that Provide Comfort is somehow connected to these attacks. This would significantly increase the chance of terrorist attacks against coalition forces. The normal reaction to these incidents is that when Turkish fighters enter, coalition forces exit the area of operations until the Turkish strikes are completed.⁶¹

Each of these restrictions is the result of a valid concern on the part of the Turkish government over the sovereignty of their airspace and the possible backlash of an inappropriate military response. The Turks have the right to protect themselves from terrorist attack and to know what coalition forces are doing in their airspace. However, these restrictions also complicate the operational execution of the mission and cause additional friction. To date, they have not been a serious detriment. However, they demonstrate the complexities of coalition operations and the potential for a host nation to restrict operations.

Summary

Airpower was essential to creating and maintaining the secure environment needed for humanitarian relief efforts in northern Iraq. Iraq's continued belligerence against its Kurdish and Shiite populations is a clear indication that this secure environment is the result of the coercive pressure exerted by Provide Comfort and other efforts such as economic sanctions and political pressures. Within this, airpower has been the single most decisive military element in maintaining that security.

During the initial stages of the operation, airpower primarily supported JTF Bravo in creating a ground exclusion zone in northern Iraq. The use of "motivational CAS" to compel Iraqi ground forces to withdraw without a fight was an important use of airpower. Airpower did not do it alone, however; the powerful ground forces of JTF Bravo were essential to this process. Still, airpower was a key supporting factor in mission success. Once the ground exclusion zone was in place, the long-term presence of airpower has deterred violations and enforced compliance when necessary. This has been the single most effective use of airpower in Provide Comfort. Coalition air forces have

deterred Iraq from using its most powerful weapons against the Kurds and allowed the Peshmerga to protect the Kurdish population. While airpower has not eliminated fighting in northern Iraq, it has kept it at a level that does not threaten the stability of the region. Finally, the presence of coalition aircraft has continuously provided reassurance to the Kurds. The presence of aircraft overhead convinced the Kurds it was safe to go back to Iraq. Since then, the security provided by coalition aircraft has given the Kurds the confidence to conduct elections and to continue the political process of reconciliation with Saddam's government.

The second major conclusion is that the nature of the Iraqi state and the unique circumstances surrounding the conflict combined to make Provide Comfort a near-ideal situation for airpower in a peace enforcement operation. The intervening forces could focus on a single, centralized government with tight control over a modern conventional military force. Having just been defeated in Desert Storm, Iraq was unprepared and unwilling to significantly resist the coalition efforts to impose peace in northern Iraq. The nature of the fighting and the environmental conditions all favored using air forces. This combination of factors gave the coalition many options for using airpower as a forceful tool of diplomacy. Thus, Provide Comfort is an important case study in understanding how airpower can be used as an element of military force in a peace enforcement operation.

However, the critical lessons from Provide Comfort lie in the evaluation of the political factors that have made airpower so effective. First, the coalition maintained a clear and limited military objective. The objectives today, as in April 1991, are to provide a secure environment for effective humanitarian relief efforts and resettlement of Kurdish refugees. By limiting the objective and not trying to force a political solution, Provide Comfort has not threatened Saddam's or the Kurds' core interests. The message that Provide Comfort was only intending to establish security conditions for humanitarian operations was clearly transmitted to the government of Iraq from the very beginning.⁶²

The next, and perhaps the most important factor in the success of Operation Provide Comfort is the political cohesion of the coalition to include the willingness to use force whenever needed. Although the coalition uses UN Resolution 688 to justify the intervention, it is a small multilateral coalition led by a single nation. This has resulted in clear strategic guidance and clear lines of authority from political leaders to military commanders. The coalition has also shown itself to be willing to use force when necessary, as indicated by the fighting that occurred between January and August 1993. As a result, the presence of coalition aircraft in northern Iraq continues to present a credible deterrent to Iraqi aggression.

Finally, the command and control for airpower in Provide Comfort is adequate to meet the needs of the mission. Military commanders have sufficient authority to conduct operations without undue political consultations, including development of ROE that are flexible enough to meet the needs of an evolving operation. Using a highly centralized command

structure, the CFACC has been able to coordinate all resources to the best benefit of the CTF. And although coalition operations within the Turkish military and political structure has caused some friction, the negative effect has been minimized.

Notes

1. Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Peacekeeping Operation in Northern Iraq," in David A. Charter, ed., *Peacekeeping and the Challenge of Civil Conflict Resolution* (University of New Brunswick: Centre for Conflict Studies, 1994), 97; and "Iraq Accepts U. N. Cease-Fire Terms for a Formal End to the Persian Gulf War," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1991 (New York: Facts on File Inc., 1992), 253-55. Estimates vary as to the exact number of Kurdish refugees in Turkey. However, 450,000 is a good average estimate.

2. Jane E. Stromseth, "Iraq's Repression of Its Civilian Population: Collective Responses and Continuing Challenges," in Lori Fisler Damrosch, ed., *Enforcing Restraint* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 80.

3. Stromseth, 25; "Atrocities Against Kurds Alleged," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1992, 145; and Gunter, 97.

4. "Revolts in Basra, Other Cities;" "Revolts against Saddam Hussein Continue in Iraq; Unrest Spreads to Baghdad," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1991, 151, 165-66.

5. George J. Church, "Keeping Hands Off," *Time*, 8 April 1991, 22-25; Strobe Talbot, "Post Victory Blues," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 1 (America and the World 1991/92): 61-64.

6. "Revolts against Saddam Hussein Continue in Iraq; Unrest Spreads to Baghdad," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1991, 165-66.

7. Howard G. Chua-Eoan, "Defeat and Flight," *Time*, 15 April 1991, 23.

8. Talbot, 64; "U. N. Passes Persian Gulf Cease Fire Resolution; Iraqi Forces Rout Kurds;" "Iraq Accepts U. N. Cease-Fire Terms for a Formal End to the Persian Gulf War," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1991, 229, 253-55.

9. UN Security Council Resolution 688, 5 April 1991, par. 1.

10. Stromseth, 89.

11. Talbot, 64.

12. Daniel F. Harrington et al., "History of Combined Task Force Provide Comfort, 6 April 1991-30 June 1992, Draft, Volume I: Narrative" (U) (Unpublished report, Maxwell AFB, Ala.: USAF Historical Research Agency, July 1992), 20. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.

13. *Ibid.*, 116-17. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.

14. "Iraq Accepts U. N. Cease-Fire Terms for a Formal End to the Persian Gulf War;" "Aid to Kurds Stepped Up as Refugee crisis Escalates; U.S. Allies to Build Camp in Iraqi Territory." *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1991, 253-55, 269-71.

15. Maj Gen James L. Jamerson, USAF, Deputy Commanding General, CTF Provide Comfort, interview with SMSgt Thomas L. Raab on 21 June 1991 at Incirlik AB, Turkey, transcript in Daniel F. Harrington et al., "History of Combined Task Force Provide Comfort, 6 April 1991-30 June 1992, Draft, Volume II: Appendixes" (U) (Unpublished report, Maxwell AFB, Ala.: USAF Historical Research Agency, July 1992), Appendix 16. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.

16. Gunter, 100-5; and "Iraq Accepts U. N. Cease-Fire Terms for a Formal End to the Persian Gulf War," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1991, 253-55.

17. Stromseth, 90.

18. Lt Gen John M. Shalikashvili, USA, commander, CTF Provide Comfort, interview with Lt Col Gordon W. Rudd at Incirlik AB, Turkey, transcript in Harrington et al., "History of Combined Task Force Provide Comfort, 6 April 1991-30 June 1992, Draft, Volume II: Appendixes" (U), Appendix 16. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.

19. Brig Gen Roger E. Carlton, USAF, CTF Provide Comfort commander, June 1994 to February 1995, interview with author, 25 April 1995.
20. Operation Provide Comfort Command Briefing presented to an Air War College Regional Studies Trip on 28 March 1995, notes in "Trip Report of the USAF Air War College Class of 1995 Regional Security Analysis Trip to Southeastern Europe" (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air War College, March 1995).
21. Col Ronald A. Winters, USAF, 39th Group Deputy Commander for Operations, Incirlik AB, Turkey from April 1990 to April 1992, interview with author, 28 April 1995.
22. Maj Dave Leffler, USAF, Forward Air Controller with American ground forces during Provide Comfort I, interview with author, 24 May 1995. Major Leffler recalled two specific occasions when his unit used this technique to avoid combat. Also, Harrington et al., "History of Combined Task Force Provide Comfort, 6 April 1991–30 June 1992, Draft, Volume I: Narrative" (U), 74. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.
23. Colonel Winters interview.
24. Harrington et al., "History of Combined Task Force Provide Comfort, 6 April 1991-30 June 1992, Draft, Volume I: Narrative" (U), 29. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.
25. Ibid., 85. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.
26. "U.S., Allies Set Iraq No Fly Zone; Bush Cites Harsh Repression of Shiites," Facts on File Yearbook 1992 (New York: Facts on File Inc., 1993), 625.
27. "Iraq: U.S. Planes Hit Missile Battery," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993 (New York: Facts on File Inc., 1994), 622.
28. "Iraq Declares Cease-Fire after More Attacks by U.S., Allies," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 29.
29. "U.S. Missile Attack Targets Iraqi Intelligence Agency; Baghdad Raid Retaliates for Bush Death Plot," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 481.
30. Iraq announced that they would cease harassment of US and allied aircraft and that they would guarantee the safety of UN arms inspections two days after the attacks on the Zaafaraniya complex. "Iraq Declares Cease-Fire after More Attacks by U.S. Allies," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 29.
31. "Iraq: U.S. Planes Hit Missile Battery," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 622.
32. Major General Jamerson interview.
33. Efraim Karsh and Inari Rautsi, Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography (New York: Free Press, 1991), 267; and Church, 22.
34. Brigadier General Carlton and Colonel Winters interviews.
35. Karsh and Rautsi, 267–74.
36. Chua-Eoan, 22.
37. One example of this was a two-day battle between Kurdish Guerrillas and Iraqi government troops near the town of Sulaymaniyah in mid-July of 1991. DOD officials reported that the Kurds won the battle, forcing Iraqi troops to pull out of the area. "Other Iraqi News," Facts on File Yearbook, 1991, 551.
38. "U.S., Allied Troops Establish Refugee Havens in Iraq; Kurds Reach Agreement on Autonomy." Facts on File Yearbook, 1991, 293–95.
39. Statement of Lt Gen John M. Shalikhshvili, US Army, commander, Operation Provide Comfort before the House Armed Services Committee Defense Policy Panel, 4 September 1991.
40. Stromseth, 98.
41. Colonel Winters interview.
42. "Kurds Declare Tie in Elections," Facts on File Yearbook, 1992, 399.
43. Brigadier General Carlton interview.
44. "Iraq Declares Cease-Fire after More Attacks by U.S. Allies," and "U.S. Missile Attack Targets Iraqi Intelligence Agency; Baghdad Raid Retaliates for Bush Death Plot," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 29, 481.
45. Lieutenant General Shalikhshvili interview.
46. Maj Steve Kerbow, 39th Group Chief of Current Operations, Incirlik AB, Turkey, 1992–1993, interview with author, 21 May 1995. Major Kerbow confirmed that although he had heard rumors of disagreements within the coalition, they had little impact on the operation.

47. Brigadier General Carlton and Colonel Winters interviews. Both General Carlton and Colonel Winters also stated that there has never been total agreement on the details of the ROE between the three nations providing forces to the CTF. However, these disagreements have been overcome at the task force level and have not had a significant negative impact on the operation.
48. Harrington et al., 83. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.
49. "Kurds Declare a Tie in Elections," Facts on File Yearbook, 1992, 399.
50. Lt Col Dave Curdy, interview with the author, 19 May 1995. Lieutenant Colonel Curdy was the 48th Operations Support Squadron (OSS) commander, Lakenheath AB, England. He is an F-15E pilot who flew missions in Provide Comfort during December 1993 and January 1994.
51. Brigadier General Carlton interview.
52. Major Kerbow interview. Major Kerbow stated that the decision to use force could be delegated to the aircrew, the command element on the AWACS, the CFACC, the CTF J-3. It could also be made by the CTF commander.
53. Proven Force was the name given to air operations conducted out of Incirlik Air Base during Desert Storm.
54. Major General Jamerson interview.
55. Tactical control is defined as the command authority over assigned or attached forces or commands, or military capability or forces made available for tasking, that is limited to the detailed and, usually, local direction and control of movements or maneuvers necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned. Joint Pub 3-56.1, Command and Control for Joint Air Operations, 14 November 1994, GL-7.
56. Harrington et al., 66-67. (Secret) Information extracted is unclassified.
57. Brigadier General Carlton interview.
58. Brigadier General Carlton and Colonel Winters interviews.
59. Brigadier General Carlton and Major Kerbow interviews.
60. Brigadier General Carlton interview. He also mentioned that on occasion missions have been canceled because this down-link was not available due to technical difficulties.
61. Brigadier General Carlton interview.
62. Major General Jamerson interview.

Chapter 4

Intervention in Somalia: UNITAF and UNOSOM II

Restore Hope was conducted in that twilight area between peace and war—an environment of political anarchy, with no Somali government or normal state institutions, and an unprecedented UN chapter VII mandate authorizing peace-enforcement by all means necessary.

—Gen Joseph P. Hoar
Commander in Chief, US Central Command

The roots of the Somali civil war go back to the late 1980s when rival clan groups united to fight against the regime of President Siad Barre. However, the civil war did not end with Barre's defeat in January 1991. Without a common enemy to focus their attention, the many rival clans began fighting each other for control of the country which only accelerated the destruction of Somalia. To make matters worse, Barre's large inventory of weapons which he had acquired by playing East against West during the cold war were now available to the clans.¹

By the early 1990s, international relief agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Red Cross were heavily involved in helping the Somali people. However, continued fighting thwarted relief efforts. After many months of negotiations, the UN finally managed to get the warring factions to agree to a cease-fire. In return, the UN agreed to provide 50 UN observers and 500 UN peacekeepers to aid relief efforts in Somalia. The United States participated in this relief effort with a humanitarian airlift which began in August 1992. However, the cease-fire did not hold, and widespread violence and looting soon made relief operations impossible. Due largely to interference from one of Mogadishu's strongest warlords, Gen Muhammed Aideed, relief efforts had virtually stopped by November. The US Agency for International Development estimated that as much as 80 percent of the relief supplies intended for starving people were being taken by thieves and bandits.²

As graphic pictures of the starvation and suffering appeared in the media, the United States came under increasing pressure to do something. Internal pressure coming from key congressional leaders and key Bush administration officials, combined with international appeals to America's traditional moral leadership, prompted President George Bush to take action. On 21 November 1992, the Deputies Committee of the National Security Council met and

recommended military intervention in Somalia. Several days later, President Bush offered to send American troops to Somalia to provide security for humanitarian relief efforts.³

The UN Security Council accepted this offer on 3 December by passing Resolution 794 which cleared the way for a US-led coalition to intervene in Somalia. This resolution was unique in several ways. Citing chapter 7 of the UN Charter, it clearly authorized the use of force to accomplish the mission. It also specifically authorized the United States, in coordination with the secretary-general of the United Nations, to “make the necessary arrangements for the unified command and control of the forces involved.”⁴ Finally, it called for a limited US effort “to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia.”⁵ Based on this limited mandate, the United States began Operation Restore Hope.

Military Intervention in Somalia

The military intervention in Somalia went through two distinct phases. The first phase was Operation Restore Hope. Although authorized by a UN mandate, Restore Hope was controlled and executed by the United States. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) modified an off-the-shelf plan and formed Combined Task Force Somalia using the US Marines’ I Marine Expeditionary Forces (I MEF) Headquarters as its basis. The military coalition grew rapidly to include the US Army’s 10th Mountain Division and other troops from 23 different nations. At the request of the United Nations, the task force was renamed the United Task Force (UNITAF).⁶

Based on the United States’ interpretation of UN Resolution 794, CENTCOM limited the mission to the short-term stabilization of the security situation in Somalia needed for humanitarian efforts to resume. UNITAF was seen as a force to provide immediate relief and give the UN time to organize a coalition for the long-term rehabilitation of Somalia.⁷ UNITAF was conducted in four phases. During Phase I, Marines deployed to Mogadishu to establish security and open the port and airfield. Phase II began on 13 December when the 10th Mountain Division arrived to secure the lines of communication and secure relief centers in the interior of Somalia. During Phase III the operations expanded to provide relief supplies to a wider area in southern Somalia. By March, UNITAF was ready to turn the operation over to the United Nations. Phase IV was completed on 4 May 1992, as US forces gave control of operations in Somalia to UN forces.⁸

The UN Security Council passed Resolution 814 on 26 March 1993, creating UNOSOM II. The mandate of this resolution went well beyond that of Restore Hope, reflecting a clear preference for using military force to create an expanded security environment for long-term stability operations in Somalia. It specifically called for the disarmament of the clans as a necessary condition for the rehabilitation of the Somali political institutions and economy. It

expanded the UN forces in Somalia, kept them directly under UN command, and specifically authorized them under chapter 7 to use force as necessary to accomplish this mission.⁹

General Aideed, who had a historical mistrust of the United Nations, resisted UNOSOM II from the very beginning. As the violence aimed at coalition forces increased throughout the summer of 1993, UNOSOM II escalated its own use of force. Following a 5 June ambush that killed 23 Pakistani peacekeepers, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 837, demanding the “arrest and detention for prosecution, trial and punishment,” of those responsible for the attack.¹⁰ What followed was an attempt to coerce General Aideed into compliance followed by an all-out manhunt to capture him. The United Nations blamed him for the 5 June ambush, and on 17 June Adm Jonathan Howe, the UN special representative to Somalia, specifically called for his arrest.¹¹ However, General Aideed successfully avoided all UN efforts to capture him and won a five-month battle of attrition against UN forces.

Following the 3 October raid by US Army Rangers in which 18 Americans were killed, President Bill Clinton announced that the United States would leave Somalia by March 1994. President Clinton also said that US troops would no longer attempt to disarm Somali clans but would only protect the UNOSOM II forces and ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian aid.¹² This signaled a fundamental change in the UN mission as UN troops took a much less aggressive posture. UNOSOM II not only failed to capture Aideed, it actually made the security situation in Somalia worse. By November 1993, Somali clans were once again involved in a raw power struggle.¹³ Ultimately, the United States pulled all of its military forces out of Somalia in March 1994, and then came back in March 1995 to secure the withdrawal of the remaining UN forces. UNOSOM II was a military failure in light of the objectives it set out to accomplish.

Airpower in Somalia

Airpower played an important supporting role in the peace enforcement efforts of UNITAF. US forces provided Cobra helicopters and carrier aircraft which were used throughout the operation to signal coalition resolve during negotiations, support coalition ground forces, and conduct armed reconnaissance and security missions to enforce cease-fire agreements. Though not central to the success of the operation, these aircraft were nevertheless an important element in the overall success of UNITAF.

Ambassador Robert B. Oakley met with the two major clan leaders, Aideed and Ali Mahdi, on 7 and 8 December to pave the way for the Marine landings. During these meetings, Ambassador Oakley reminded the clan leaders of the overwhelming firepower that had defeated Iraq in Desert Storm. At the same time, US F-14 Tomcats were flying low over Mogadishu to announce the

arrival of the I MEF and to help Ambassador Oakley make his point. Evidently the tactic worked, as the two leaders agreed to a cease-fire on 11 December and did not actively resist the arrival of UNITAF forces.¹⁴

In similar fashion, Ambassador Oakley would consult with clan elders prior to introducing coalition forces into new humanitarian relief sectors. During these meetings he would usually have Cobra helicopters hovering nearby in full view of the Somali leaders. The Marines would also provide fighter aircraft as a show of force, and to provide on-call close air support (CAS) in the event of violence. Once again, the tactic appeared to work, as coalition forces generally faced minimal resistance as they expanded their operations.¹⁵

A second major function of airpower was to support ground forces. Marine and Army attack helicopters provided security and armed reconnaissance for ground forces during patrols and convoy escort missions. In addition, assault helicopters allowed ground forces to rapidly deploy to different areas within their sectors to establish new food distribution points or react to violent encounters between rival clans. The combined efforts of these military forces were effective in controlling the violence in Somalia.

UNITAF demonstrated that it was willing to use force to accomplish its mission. Coalition forces began enforcing cease-fire arrangements almost immediately on 12 December, when Cobra helicopters returned hostile fire and destroyed three armed vehicles.¹⁶ In a similar incident, Marine ground forces, supported by attack helicopters, assaulted one of Aideed's cantonment areas on 7 January in response to random sniper fire coming from these buildings.¹⁷ A final incident occurred on 25 January when General Morgan's forces, ignoring repeated warnings, brought their technical vehicles out of their cantonment areas towards the city of Kismayu to challenge a rival warlord. Cobra helicopters attacked and destroyed all of the technical vehicles followed by Belgian ground forces who engaged the remaining hostile ground forces. When it was over, Ambassador Oakley commented that the attack was necessary to "teach General Morgan a lesson . . . for not respecting the cease fire."¹⁸

These are but a few examples of the hundreds of incidents in which coalition forces used force to discreetly enforce cease-fire agreements and deter rival clans from resisting coalition relief efforts. According to Ambassador Oakley, there were almost no weapons on the street by the end of January. In addition, a great deal of commercial activity had resumed. And, although low-level skirmishes and clan tensions persisted, there was no major return to the previous level of violence.¹⁹

UNITAF was clearly a success, and airpower, mainly in the form of attack helicopters, was an important contributing element in this effort. According to Army after-action reports, "The impact of the AH-1 (Cobra) attack helicopter cannot be overstated. The psychological effect of attack helicopters in this low intensity style conflict established the aircraft's value—frequently without firing a shot."²⁰ The combination of tough diplomacy, well-armed ground forces, and tactical aviation forces was very effective in enforcing compliance with cease-fire agreements with minimum use of force.

However, when UNOSOM II took control of operations in Somalia on 4 May 1993, General Aideed began to test its resolve. The death of 23 Pakistani soldiers on 5 June brought a halt to all food distribution in Mogadishu. It also spurred an immediate and violent reaction from both UN and US leaders, who blamed Aideed for the attacks. Admiral Howe, the UN special representative, addressed a stern letter to Aideed warning him to cooperate and cease his aggressive actions. US helicopters, belonging to the US quick reaction force, began attacking General Aideed's arms storage areas in Mogadishu the next day. Finally, on 7 June, President Clinton ordered AC-130 gunships to Djibuti to increase the firepower available to the UNOSOM forces.²¹

On 12 June, UNOSOM II began a week-long "pressure" campaign against Aideed. What followed were five nights of intensive air and ground military operations in Mogadishu. The attacks normally began with a series of broadcasts warning civilians to clear the area followed by air strikes using AC-130 gunships and Cobra helicopters. Ground forces would then complete the attack by searching the area of the attack, seizing weapons, and capturing Aideed supporters. On 18 June, President Clinton announced that the operations against Aideed were over and declared them a success, saying "the military back of Aideed has been broken."²²

Although these attacks may have achieved their tactical goals of putting pressure on Aideed, they fell well short of minimizing his aggression against UN forces. Aideed's supporters continued to harass and kill UN soldiers and incite public demonstrations for the next three months. Surprisingly, the attacks increased Aideed's support among the Somali people. He was able to depict UNOSOM II as another example of foreign domination of the Somali people and used the international news media to play against US sensitivities by emphasizing the civilian casualties the attacks caused. Finally, Aideed gunmen began using women and children as human shields to provoke a reaction from UN forces, placing them in a no-win situation. If they fired at the gunmen, they were bound to kill civilians. If not, they risked being killed themselves. Thus, Aideed countered the firepower of UN forces in unique and very effective ways to which neither airpower nor ground forces could adequately respond.²³

While UN efforts outside Mogadishu continued unhindered, relief efforts within the city fell into disarray. Ground forces became hesitant to leave the protection of the UN compound and violence continued unabated in the city. On 17 June Admiral Howe officially called for General Aideed's arrest, which began a three-month manhunt to capture him. However, the escalating violence caused the coalition to split apart as contingents from different countries began to take orders from their national governments and ignore orders from UN commanders. Finally, after the 3 October raid, US resolve collapsed. Aideed won out in the end. UN forces withdrew from Somalia in March 1995, and Aideed is still a powerful force in Somalia.²⁴

The Somalia operation highlights both the capabilities and limitations of airpower in peace enforcement operations conducted in an underdeveloped

country. Airpower had a major psychological impact on the actions of the Somali people during UNITAF. It was very useful in controlling the use of technical vehicles and in preventing major clan fighting. However, operations against General Aideed highlight the limits of airpower to coerce a political leader to give up what he holds dear. An analysis of the factors that contributed to the success of UNITAF and failure of UNOSOM II provides unique insights into the proper role of airpower in peace enforcement operations.

Nature of the Conflict

Somalia demonstrated many of the difficulties of using airpower to intervene in an undeveloped third world country. Somalia had collapsed under the stress of civil war and had no state government and very little infrastructure. The political power and fighting within Somalia was divided among six major clans, each composed of multiple subclans, and finally sub-subclans.²⁵ The leader of each clan ruled by consensus, and did not have total control of the actions of the many subclans beneath him. Somalia has been appropriately described as a system in complete chaos, unable to control its own actions and destiny.²⁶ Intervention in this type of situation provided few options for the coercive use of airpower.

With no central government or infrastructure, there was little that air forces could hold at risk to influence Somali behavior. The only functioning systems in Somali society were the clans and subclans who had systematically destroyed the means they needed to feed their own people. The primary means of influence in Somali society were food and military force, both of which were being controlled by clan or subclan leaders. Thus, the intervention in Somalia required controlling the many military forces of the clans and delivering food. However, the chaotic state of affairs made even this difficult. Weapons were everywhere in the country and people openly displayed them in the streets. Clans also used "technical vehicles" and other heavy weapons to intimidate and control other clans. No one wore uniforms, and there was no way to identify friend or foe.²⁷ And, although clan leaders were easily identifiable, they did not always have complete control of the actions of their subclans or militia forces.²⁸ Ultimately, for military force to be effective, it had to extend a coercive influence down to the individual Somali warrior.

The nature of the fighting in Somalia also made it difficult to intervene with airpower. With at least six different factions fighting, there was no clear enemy, only starvation, disorder, and anarchy. Thus, UNITAF set up strict rules for controlling weapons called the "four No's:" no bandits, no checkpoints, no technical vehicles, and no visible weapons in the cities.²⁹ By mutual agreement, most clan leaders moved all their heavy weapons to cantonment areas and complied with these restrictions.³⁰ However, there was

always the possibility of resistance from small and disorganized factions not under the control of clan leaders.

In addition, almost every mission conducted in Somalia required operating in cities and built-up areas.³¹ Thus, potential hostile forces were mixed with civilians creating a high potential for collateral damage. Beyond identifying technical vehicles, which were declared a “threat” by the rules of engagement (ROE), only individual judgment could separate friend from foe and properly apply the overarching principles of minimum collateral damage and minimum force.³² Even when targets were identified, the destructive power of even the smallest weapons available to most aircraft could prove too much.³³

Airpower is inherently limited in this type of environment. It is nearly impossible for high-speed fighters or bombers to identify targets or make proper ROE decisions. Even if targets are properly identified for them, aircraft may have too much firepower to limit collateral damage in an urban environment. Peace enforcement operations in urban terrain or against small bands of fighters who depend on the firepower of the individual for their strength will require strong ground forces to be effective. However, as demonstrated in UNITAF, aircraft such as attack helicopters and AC-130 gunships, which can detect individual targets and apply small, lethal doses of firepower, can be effective support elements to ground forces in these operations.

Political Factors and Coalition Warfare

The intervention in Somalia was a complicated political affair with no single cause of success or failure. However, analyzing how political factors and coalition warfare affected the efficacy of airpower in Somalia does provide some useful insight into the political limits of using airpower in future peace enforcement operations. UNITAF and UNOSOM II represent two fundamentally different approaches to peace enforcement and the use of airpower. UNITAF relied on strong diplomacy, using military force to complement negotiations and enforce limited security objectives. UNOSOM II used the military as a stronger coercive force to achieve expanded objectives which included eliminating one of the belligerents from the political reconciliation process. In the end, it failed because it overreached the limits of what military force, and airpower in particular, could accomplish in Somalia.

There is little doubt that UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali had ambitious goals in Somalia. From the very beginning he was in favor of a strong UN-commanded coalition instead of a US-led force.³⁴ And, when the UN Security Council opted for the option proposed by the United States, he almost immediately began lobbying for the United States to expand the mission to include disarming Somali factions, collecting weapons, removing mines, and training a police force.³⁵ While some expansion of the tactical missions was inevitable in Somalia, CENTCOM resisted all attempts to

change the basic mission focus. In the end, US policy makers sided with CENTCOM and limited the military operations to those tasks required to achieve near-term security for the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies.³⁶

As a result of the limited objectives, the coalition maintained a strong consensus in support of UNITAF. There was widespread public support for saving Somali children from starvation through limited military intervention. In addition, Ambassador Oakley was able to convince the Somali factions that UNITAF was not a threat to their power. Instead, he tried to involve them in the reconciliation process. He was very careful not to take sides or to favor one clan over another.

The United States also played a key role in uniting the coalition. While it was imperative to make the coalition an international effort, the United States clearly ran the show. Lieutenant General Johnston, the I MEF commander, had adequate control of all forces to accomplish the mission due to close liaison between the host nation, CENTCOM, and the task force in Somalia. Because of the limited mission and strong US support, individual nations were willing to give operational control of their forces to a US commander. And, while each country maintained its own national command channels, a strong centralized command structure and a limited mission ensured each national contingent could fully support the UNITAF mission within their own national priorities and objectives.³⁷

There were also clear lines of authority from policy makers to the task force. Ambassador Oakley was appointed as the president's special envoy to Somalia and given the appropriate diplomatic authority to complement General Johnston's military authority. Ambassador Oakley and General Johnston collaborated in a relationship that proved uniquely capable of blending military force with diplomatic negotiations. Ambassador Oakley preceded almost every significant military move by negotiating with village elders or clan leaders using a strategy of dialogue and cooperation combined with the implicit threat of coercion using military force.³⁸ Oakley and Johnston, working closely together, were able to maintain a careful balance between restraint and credibility and secure the cooperation of most clan leaders with minimum use of force.

UNOSOM II, on the other hand, chose a greatly expanded mission to include completely disarming the clans. While many of the clans voluntarily complied, General Aideed and other leaders actively resisted these efforts. Aideed had a long-standing distrust of the United Nations and may have felt threatened by the possibility of losing his weapons, which was his main source of power. Aideed had never fully complied with the UNITAF-brokered cease-fire, electing to move his technical vehicles out of Mogadishu rather than place them in a cantonment area.³⁹ Aideed may have also intentionally tried to provoke a UN response, knowing it would bolster his power in Mogadishu, which had been undermined by relief efforts.⁴⁰ Whatever the reason for Aideed's actions, labeling Aideed an outlaw and trying to capture him only strengthened his resolve to resist. Aideed considered himself the rightful ruler of Somalia and was not going to be easily swayed from this

goal.⁴¹ Thus, the UN actions against Aideed threatened a core interest which he was willing to defend with great vigor and determination.

UNOSOM II did not have the political consensus needed to conduct an expanded peace enforcement mission. Somalia did not represent an important national interest to any of the nations in the coalition and many of them viewed it as a strictly humanitarian operation. When the United Nations, supported by the United States, took an aggressive approach to disarming the clans, the coalition began to crack. Several countries refused to obey the orders of the UNOSOM II commanders when the violence escalated. The Italians in particular openly defied the UN decision to pursue Aideed. The Italian government complained that the United Nations was losing sight of the mission and that the United States had excessive influence over military operations.⁴²

Even the United States, which supported the more aggressive action, refused to commit totally to the operation. US combat forces were kept strictly under American command and were to be used only as a quick reaction force to protect UN forces. In this way, their exposure to hostile fire was limited. Thus, there was not a clear line of authority, and different forces participating in the operation received guidance from many sources. This command relationship exemplified the lack of unity within the coalition. There were four distinct chains of command to translate political guidance into military action. The first was the UN channel which ran from the UN Secretary General to General Bir, the UN commander. The second was from the US national command through CENTCOM to General Montgomery, the commander of all US forces and the US quick reaction force. In addition, when the US Army Rangers came to Mogadishu, they had a separate command channel which did not include General Montgomery. Finally, many nations reverted back to national command channels and refused to obey orders given by the UN commander.⁴³

As a result, military planners did not always have clear objectives when conducting military operations. The attacks against General Aideed in June 1993 are a good example. President Clinton first described the attacks as “essential to send a clear message to the armed gangs” and “to strengthen the effectiveness and credibility of UN peacekeeping in Somalia and around the world.”⁴⁴ A Department of Defense (DOD) official later explained that the goals of the attack were to create safe conditions in Mogadishu for the resumption of relief supplies by putting pressure on General Aideed’s forces, disrupting his command and control, driving his forces from their base of operation and destroying weapons caches.⁴⁵ Finally, a staff planner commented that in his opinion the mission was to get Aideed and some of his recalcitrant warlords to conform to UN guidance and surrender their heavy weapons.⁴⁶

It appears there were at least two sets of competing objectives. The political objective of the United States was to make a statement to Aideed and the world that the United States and the United Nations were willing to take strong action when provoked. They hoped to impress Aideed with the

potential strength of coalition military forces and weaken his willingness to resist. At the same time, the president may have used the attacks to answer his critics who were accusing him of being weak on foreign policy.⁴⁷ The UN military objective, however, was to undermine Aideed's ability to continue aggressive actions against UN forces through punishing air and ground attacks. And even in the beginning, there was the unspoken possibility of capturing Aideed.

Another factor which influenced planning and execution of the missions was the sensitivity to casualties and collateral damage. Aware of the fragility of political and public support for UNOSOM II, and the media focus on every attack, planners made every effort to minimize casualties and collateral damage. Major General Montgomery, the deputy commander of UN forces, explained that strikes were planned in detail to avoid harming civilians or starting fires.⁴⁸ In addition, the political sensitivity of the attacks caused political leaders to get actively involved at every level. While the UNOSOM II staff had good intelligence as to the location of many of Aideed's weapons caches, targeting and planning was influenced by both CENTCOM and the White House.⁴⁹

A lack of political will and sensitivity to casualties and negative press meant that air and ground attacks against Aideed ended up being mostly a show of force. The target selection simply did not make sense if the intent was to disable Aideed militarily. For example, on 14 July gunships attacked and destroyed an open yard filled with heavy machinery being used to build sand barricades around Aideed's house.⁵⁰ Similarly, AC-130s attacked an abandoned cigarette factory on 12 June that had been used as a hideout for snipers and ambushes. However, at the time of the attack, the building was most likely empty.⁵¹ Finally, the task force put a high priority on destroying the radio transmitter Aideed was using to broadcast messages to his Somali supporters. However, only one out of every 25 Somalis owns a radio. Gen Anthony C. Zinni commented that the only people who actively listen to these broadcasts were US intelligence sources.⁵²

The method for conducting the attacks also reflected considerable restraint. These were always preceded by loudspeaker broadcasts to give anyone near the buildings time to evacuate. The aircraft that initiated the attacks often used warning shots to scare people out of the buildings prior to full-scale attack. Finally, aircraft were sometimes not allowed to use enough force to have a high chance of destroying the targets.⁵³

Certainly the attacks were not totally painless. However, the restraint and sensitivity to casualties were not lost on Aideed. The Somalis by nature are a nomadic and warlike people. They are not easily impressed by a show of force, and are not impressed by minimizing casualties. In short, they are not easily coerced.⁵⁴ Perhaps the most telling evidence was the reaction of a Somali interpreter to the attacks. He was not impressed by the attacks and remarked that the US put no faith or action behind its tough words.⁵⁵ The attacks did not coerce Aideed into compliance with the UN demands. In fact, he may have seen them as a sign of weakness.

It was evident from Aideed's actions that he was not going to bow to UN pressure. General Zinni commented that Aideed was well educated, well organized, and politically astute. He was also ruthless by the very nature of the society in which he was raised.⁵⁶ Although constantly kept on the run, Aideed managed to devise a strategy that played against all the weaknesses of the coalition. Aideed used the press very well, visiting hospitals and condemning the killing of civilians. He also told the press he was willing to talk to the UN, but only after they stopped their attacks. Aideed's forces began to use human shields to create incidents that would cause civilian casualties which he capitalized on to bolster support among the people of Mogadishu and to further play against public sentiment.

Finally, Aideed fought a clever battle of attrition against UN forces. Ambushes and sniper attacks continued throughout the next three months. In August, Aideed began to specifically target US soldiers. The first US casualties occurred on 8 August when four US soldiers were killed with a remote-control land mine. The next week two prominent US senators began to question the US role in Somalia, publicly stating that it might be time to leave.⁵⁷ In addition, Aideed's supporters found they could shoot down UN helicopters with hand-held rocket-propelled grenades. The Ranger raid of 3 October was the last incident in this battle of attrition. Although a tactical success, capturing 19 of Aideed's top aides, it was a political disaster. Congressional pressure and public outrage caused the political support for US participation to collapse.

Command and Control

Operational command and control of airpower in Somalia reflected the nature of the conflict and the political sensitivities. During UNITAF, command and control was highly decentralized and depended on individual judgment and flexible ROE to avoid excessive use of force. During UNOSOM II planning was highly centralized and reflected the acute political sensitivities to military actions. However, command and control of airpower was never centralized under one commander. While this was adequate for Somalia, it created some difficulties, especially in airspace control and deconfliction.

Throughout operations in Somalia, commanders had adequate authority to develop and implement the ROE. The ROE was written by tactical units and then sent through CENTCOM channels for approval. In addition, CENTCOM offered the ROE to other participating countries who accepted them with only minor modifications.⁵⁸ Because the commander had control of the ROE, he could change them to fit the situation. For example, General Johnston decided, based on the general compliance of the Somalis with the cease-fire agreement, that commanders would first challenge technical vehicles, using force only if they did not voluntarily surrender. However, when violence

escalated in June, the UN force commander issued an order changing this interpretation to allow commanders to engage without provocation.⁵⁹ This is a good example of how military commanders maintained a balance between credibility and restraint by having control of the ROE.

The nature of the conflict also dictated a decentralized command structure for airpower resources. The task force commander did not maintain direct control of airpower. Rather, tactical units such as the 10th Mountain Division and I MEF kept command of their aviation units. Because the primary role of airpower in UNITAF was to support ground forces, this command relationship made sense. In addition, aviation units used the same basic ROE as ground forces, but were given specific training on how to implement them.⁶⁰ In addition, there were generally adequate forces available to meet all requirements creating little need for centralized control.⁶¹ Thus, the command relationship and the ROE fit the conflict environment.

UNITAF coordinated the efforts of tactical aviation units through two agencies. The J-3 Air Staff division had the authority to task subordinate commands to support task force level missions when needed and maintained central tasking authority over some limited resources such as carrier aircraft.⁶² In addition, the Airspace Control Agency (ACA), as a special staff function, acted as a central clearinghouse for publishing the flight schedule for fixed-wing aircraft and establishing procedures for airspace control and deconfliction.⁶³

Although adequate for the task at hand, this command relationship generated a lot of confusion. Subordinate units were sometimes unclear about which agency controlled which functions and often contacted the wrong agency, slowing the coordination process.⁶⁴ In addition, the 3rd Marine Air Wing found it initially had neither the facilities nor the trained personnel to operate the ACA.⁶⁵ Eventually the ACA disbanded, leaving all command and control functions to the J-3 Air and subordinate units.

UNOSOM II, on the other hand, used a very centralized command structure for planning the punitive strikes against General Aideed. Mission planning was conducted on an ad hoc basis using representatives from the different subordinate units involved in the mission. However, operational control of all airpower resources stayed with the individual subordinate commanders.⁶⁶ As discussed earlier, the command relationships for the coalition as a whole were convoluted and confused. They worked at the operational level only through the superior efforts of senior leaders like General Montgomery.

While adequate, the command relationship used in UNOSOM II is not a model for future peace enforcement operations. Perhaps the biggest weakness appeared in the area of airspace control. UNOSOM II did not have a competent central airspace coordination authority, which resulted in the collapse of all airspace coordination. The Australians controlled the Mogadishu airport, but all other airspace in Somalia went totally uncontrolled. This was adequate for much of the operation. However, when Navy and Marine forces returned to Somalia in March 1994 to help withdraw

US forces, they had to reestablish airspace deconfliction procedures to create a safe flying environment.⁶⁷ This demonstrates a major disadvantage of using a totally decentralized command and control network for airpower.

Summary

Trying to fight an amorphous enemy in an urban environment is a difficult task for airpower. However, even in this limited tactical environment, airpower proved its value. When properly combined with tough diplomacy and powerful ground forces, aviation units of the Army and Marines provided valuable support to the UNITAF mission. They were able to help control heavy weapons through armed reconnaissance and their physical presence was often enough to deter violence and control crowds even in difficult urban situations. The 10th Mountain Division described the value of their attack helicopters as follows:

The major impact of attack helicopters in the Somalia AOR was their psychological effect. This, combined with a judicious use of the weapons system under the Rules of Engagement (ROE), combined to make the aircraft an enormously valuable combat multiplier for the commander. On several occasions, the mere presence of the attack helicopter served as a deterrent and caused crowds and vehicles to disperse.⁶⁸

No single factor can adequately explain why UNITAF succeeded. However, the combination of a limited mission, clear lines of command authority, and strong diplomacy kept the conflict at a level that military forces could control. Rather than try to disarm the clans, UNITAF chose to allow the Somali factions to keep their weapons so long as they complied with cease-fire arrangements and followed simple restrictions on weapons cantonment.⁶⁹ Within this limited function, aviation assets proved useful.

However, UNOSOM II demonstrated the limits of using airpower in peace enforcement operations. Both the nature of the conflict and several political factors limited the effectiveness of airpower in coercing Aideed. The coalition simply did not have the cohesion or will to pursue an aggressive coercive strategy. Likewise, sensitivities to collateral damage and civilian casualties forced the UN to pull its punches to avoid a backlash of public opinion. Finally, UNOSOM II was faced with a clever enemy in one of the worst possible environments for attempting coercive diplomacy. UNOSOM II overstepped the bounds of what could be accomplished using military force.

Notes

1. Samuel M. Makinda, *Seeking Peace from Chaos: Humanitarian Intervention in Somalia* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), 1–28.
2. “UN Backs US-led Force to Safeguard Food Deliveries in Somalia,” *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1992 (New York: Facts on File Inc., 1993), 905.

3. Jay E. Hines et al., "USCENTCOM in Somalia: Operations PROVIDE RELIEF and RESTORE HOPE" (Unpublished monograph, MacDill AFB, Fla.: United States Central Command History Office, November 1994), 1-20.
4. UN Security Council Resolution 794, 3 December 1992, par. 12.
5. *Ibid.*, par. 10.
6. Maj Gen Waldo D. Freeman et al., "Operation Restore Hope, a US CENTCOM Perspective," *Military Review*, September 1993, 64.
7. Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned* (Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1995), 16; and Freeman, 61-62.
8. Donatella Lorch, "US Envoy to Somalia Says American Mission Has Been Achieved." *New York Times*, 3 March 1993, A6; and Hines et al., 24-37, appendix 9.
9. UN Security Council Resolution 814, 26 March 1993, par. 4-14; and Allard, 18.
10. UN Security Council Resolution 837, 6 June 1993, par. 5; and "Somalia: 23 UN Peace-keepers Slain in Attacks," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1993 (New York: Facts on File Inc., 1994), 420.
11. "UN, Italy Clash over Somalia Mission," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1993, 515.
12. President Bill Clinton, "Somalia: Our Troops Will Leave by March 31, 1994," address on national television, 7 October 1993, in *Vital Speeches of the Day* 60, no. 2 (1 November 1993): 34-36.
13. "Somalia: Violence Erupts Among Rival Clans," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1993, 837-38.
14. Robert B. Oakley, "An Envoys Perspective," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1993, 46-47; and Hines et al., 24-25.
15. Lieutenant Colonel Donnell, I MEF G-3 Air Staff, telephone interview with author, 19 May 1995; Hines et al., 22-29; and Oakley, 48-50.
16. "Rival Somali Warlords Sign Peace Pact," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1992, 951; and Oakley, 46-48.
17. "Somalia: US Marines Capture Arms Depot," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1993, 31; and Hines et al., 30-31.
18. "Somalia: US, UN agree on Troop Transition," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1993, 78; and US Army Forces Somalia, 10th Mountain Division After Action Report, 2 June 1993, 23.
19. Oakley, 51; and Lorch, A6.
20. US Army Forces Somalia, 10th Mountain Division After Action Report, 8.
21. Donatella Lorch, "UN Moves Troops to Somali City and Vows Punishment for Attack," *New York Times*, 8 June 1993, A1; and "Somalia: 23 UN Peace-keepers Slain in Attack," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1993, 420.
22. Michael R. Gordon, "Clinton, Praising 'Success,' Says Goal Was Not to Capture Aideed," *New York Times*, 18 June 1995, A14; and "US Aircraft, UN Forces Attack Somali Warlord: Pakistani Troops Fire on Protesters," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1993, 441.
23. One example of this tactic occurred on 13 June 1993 when Somali gunmen shot at Pakistani soldiers, provoking a response which killed 20 Somalis. Michael R. Gordon, "US Intensifies Attack to Oust a Somali Clan," *New York Times*, 17 June 1993, A1; and "US Aircraft, UN Forces Attack Somali Warlord: Pakistani Troops Fire on Protesters," *Facts on File Yearbook*, 1993, 441.
24. "Cut and Run," *The Economist*, 4 March 1995, 41.
25. Walter S. Clarke, "Background Information for Operation Restore Hope" (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Department of National Security and Strategy, 1992), 2-9.
26. Lt Col Robert P. Pelligrini, USA, et al., "Somalia and the Five Rings" (Unpublished paper, Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air Command and Staff College, 1994), 28.
27. US Army Forces Somalia, 10th Mountain Division After Action Report, 19.
28. Maj Gen Anthony C. Zinni, USMC, taped interview with Lt Col Robert P. Pelligrini, 28 February 1994. General Zinni confirmed that the unit which the Marines attacked on 7 January was one of Aideed's units, but was not under Aideed's control. It was a disgruntled and poorly led militia acting on its own.
29. Hines, 43; US Army Forces Somalia, 10th Mountain Division After Action Report, 5; and Allard, 36-38.
30. Oakley, 47; and Major General Zinni interview.

31. US Army Forces Somalia, 10th Mountain Division After Action Report, 7.
32. Appendix 6 to Annex C to UNOSOM II OPLAN 1, Rules of Engagement, May 1993.
33. A clear example of this occurred on 14 October 1993 when a Cobra helicopter fired two missiles at a rocket launcher parked in a crowded neighborhood. One missile hit the target but the other hit a nearby tea shop wounding 12 civilians. "US Aircraft, UN Forces Attack Somali Warlord: Pakistani Troops Fire on Protesters," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 441.
34. James S. Sutterlin, Military Force in the Service of Peace, *Aurora Papers 18* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Global Security, 1993), 24–27.
35. "Rival Somali Warlords Sign Peace Pact," Facts on File Yearbook, 1992, 951.
36. Freeman, 64.
37. *Ibid.*, 67–70; and, Harold E. Bullock "Peace by Committee: Command and Control in Multinational Peace Enforcement Operations" (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, February 1995), 40–42.
38. Oakley, 47; and David J. Zvijac and Katherine A.W. McGrady, Operation Restore Hope: Summary Report, CRM 93–52 (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, March 1994), 15.
39. Oakley, 47.
40. "Somalia: 23 UN Peace-keepers Slain in Attacks," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 420. Speculation by analysts was that Aideed wanted to demonstrate to other clan leaders that he was still a major power and that he wanted to test the metal of the new UN troops.
41. Major General Zinni interview.
42. Donatella Lorch, "Disunity Hampering UN Somalia Effort," *New York Times*, 12 July 1993, A8; and "UN, Italy Clash Over Somalia Mission," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 515.
43. Allard, 56–61; and Lorch, "Disunity Hampering UN Somalia Effort."
44. Donatella Lorch, "UN Says Attack Dealt Heavy Blow to Somali Factions," *New York Times*, 13 June 1993, A1.
45. Michael R. Gordon, "US Intensifies Attack to Oust Leader of Somali Clan."
46. Capt Chris Snyder, USAF, telephone interview with the author, 12 May 1995.
47. Gordon, "New Strength for UN Peacekeepers: US Might," *New York Times*, 13 June 1993, A16; and "US Attacks Somali Clan Chief to Support UN Peacekeepers," *New York Times*, 12 June 1993, A1.
48. "US Aircraft, UN Forces Attack Somali Warlord: Pakistani Troops Fire on Protesters," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 441; and Lorch, "UN Says Attack Dealt Heavy Blow to Somali Faction."
49. Captain Snyder interview.
50. "US Aircraft, UN Forces Attack Somali Warlord; Pakistani Troops Fire on Protesters," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 441.
51. Lorch, "UN Says Attack Dealt Heavy Blow to Somali Factions;" and Captain Snider interview. Captain Snider commented that UN forces attacked several empty buildings. In one case, the Rangers actually assaulted a building occupied by relief workers.
52. Pelligrini et al., 45.
53. Captain Snider interview.
54. Hines et al., 10.
55. Captain Snyder interview.
56. Major General Zinni interview.
57. "Four US Soldiers Slain in Somalia," Facts on File Yearbook, 1993, 608.
58. Freeman et al., 65.
59. Allard, 36–37.
60. "Operation RESTORE HOPE Lessons Learned Report" (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Center for Army Lessons Learned, November 1993), XIV 11–XIV 16.
61. Lieutenant Colonel Donnell interview.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Katherine A. W. McGrady, The Joint Task Force in Operation Restore Hope, CRM 93–114 (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, March 1994), 56–61. The one exception was that the airlift clearance authority (ACA) had operational control (OPCON) of Marine KC-130 tankers.
64. *Ibid.*, 59.

65. Joint Universal Lessons Learned Systems Reports no. 61051-22697 and no. 61051-33407, 3d Marine Air Wing, June 1993.

66. The JSOTF maintained control of AC-130s while ground forces maintained control of attack helicopters.

67. Navy Lessons Learned report no. 00060-25580. During a telephone interview with the author, Comdr L. F. Murphy described the situation in Somalia as “frontier aviation over indian country” due to the total lack of airspace control in Mogadishu.

68. US Army Forces Somalia, 10th Mountain Division After Action Report, 67.

69. Major General Zinni interview.

Chapter 5

The Airpower Contribution to Peace Enforcement

No opponent should be free to use heavy artillery, armour and static command posts to thwart any peacekeeping activity when friendly air power can be brought to bear.

—Air Vice Marshal Tony Mason
Air Power: A Centennial Appraisal

The US national security strategy clearly states that the primary mission of its armed forces is not peace operations.¹ However, the United States will also continue to rely on military force as a means of limited intervention in multilateral peace enforcement. Thus, both military and political leaders must understand how airpower can be used as an effective coercive force to best contribute to these missions.

The military interventions in Iraq and Somalia both indicate that airpower is a useful tool of coercive diplomacy when used correctly. Provide Comfort demonstrates that under the right conditions airpower can be a powerful coercive force, significantly reducing the need for ground forces. Even in the highly unfavorable environment in Somalia, tactical aviation forces played an important psychological role in influencing clan leaders not to interfere with humanitarian relief operations. In each of these cases, different elements of airpower were used effectively to pursue a strategy of coercive diplomacy. These examples provide some insight into how airpower should be used in future peace enforcement operations and what factors will limit its effectiveness.

The nature of the conflict environment will significantly impact which form of airpower will be most useful. Centralized air forces have been most effective against modern nation states who depend on mechanized forces and aircraft as a primary component of their combat power. The same is true when the physical environment allows aircraft to easily identify belligerents and operate with limited collateral damage potential. Under these conditions, centrally controlled air forces can have a powerful coercive effect. Air forces are well suited to enforce air exclusion zones and hold concentrated mechanized ground forces at risk. They can enforce a cease-fire after it has taken effect and threaten to quickly escalate the conflict beyond peace enforcement, which can be a key factor in a successful coercive strategy. Under these circumstances, air forces can be a dominant force in securing long-term stability. A primary task for air forces in the future will be to assert

escalation dominance at the upper end of the conflict spectrum by preventing these types of forces from interfering with peace operations.

Airpower can also exert psychological pressure to help establish satisfactory cease-fire conditions between ground forces. Creative uses of airpower such as motivational close air support (CAS) or aerial demonstrations have facilitated negotiations and helped ground forces and diplomats accomplish their mission. However, the evidence suggests that air assets will normally need to be closely coordinated with a strong ground force presence when this stronger, compelling form of coercion is needed. The presence of airpower will be an important factor, but will rarely succeed as a primary force for creating cease-fire conditions between ground units, even under ideal conditions.²

When the nature of the conflict is such that small groups of soldiers can operate effectively in a physical environment which makes target acquisition difficult or involves a high potential for collateral damage, the effectiveness of airpower will be even more limited. Combating small, mobile targets, especially in urban areas will continue to be the primary responsibility of ground forces. In these situations, tactical aviation and special operations aircraft represent the best means for successfully supporting ground forces. The lessons from Somalia indicate that attack helicopters or AC-130 gunships can have a significant psychological value.

However, the conflict environment represents only one set of factors that must be analyzed before deciding how to use airpower in peace enforcement. The key problem for political leaders and military commanders in the future will be to maintain a balance between credibility and restraint. In general, this requires balancing military necessity against the political considerations of coalition operations. The political cohesion of the coalition will be the most critical factor influencing the ability of airpower to exert a coercive influence. Small coalitions based on a single nation's command and control structure have been best able to give the commander clear objectives and the authority to use force as necessary to present a credible threat. Just the opposite is true of large coalitions in which there is a wide divergence of opinion concerning the military objectives and how they should be accomplished.

The biggest influence of political factors in employing airpower has been the use of punitive air strikes. As a strong, offensive use of airpower, reprisals often invoke criticism and cause friction within the coalition. In addition, punitive strikes are often the most likely to cause collateral damage and foster media attention and negative public reactions. These factors can create a need for excessive restraint which weakens the coercive value of punitive air strikes. Reprisals may also require a lot of insight into intangible factors such as culture, society, and the personalities of individual leaders. A poorly conceived or executed punitive attack will often do more harm than good. The punitive attacks against Aideed are good examples of reprisals which generated exactly the opposite response to that intended. Punitive strikes will require a strong political commitment and superior intelligence to be

effective. Because of these difficulties, punitive attacks will rarely represent a proper application of airpower in peace enforcement.

While airpower will have an important role to play in any peace enforcement operation, it will rarely act as a stand-alone force. Air forces are better deterrent forces than compelling forces when operating under the political restraints of peace enforcement rules of engagement (ROE). They should primarily be used to assert escalation dominance at the high end of the conflict spectrum. Airpower can be an effective coercive force to demonstrate resolve as a preventive deployment or as a long-term deterrent to keep a conflict limited to at an acceptable level. In these limited cases, airpower may be a potential stand alone military force. However, when direct intervention is required, airpower is a powerful coercive force only when combined with adequate ground forces. This is especially true when the conflict environment negates much of the strength of air forces. The implication is that airpower seldom offers the possibility of intervention with limited liability in a peace enforcement operation.

A second implication is that tactical applications of airpower will continue to be an over-riding consideration in peace enforcement. The tactical aviation arms of the Army and Marine Corps are best suited for these missions. However, as operations in Bosnia and Iraq indicate, they may not always be adequate for the task. Centrally controlled air forces must be prepared to quickly shift their focus from escalation dominance to supporting ground forces as the conflict situation changes.

In each case where airpower was used successfully, the military commander had the authority and proper command structure to establish and implement the ROE. In some instances this required a centralized joint forces air component commander (JFACC) command structure. In others, such as in Somalia, decentralized control was more effective. In both cases military imperatives derived from the nature of the conflict were balanced with political restraints through the ROE and command structure. The best balance between credibility and restraint occurred when military commanders made the decisions.

This has two implications for future peace enforcement operations. First, it requires a clear line of authority from political to military leaders. The military commander must understand the political imperatives as well as the military imperatives. In this sense, the example of Ambassador Oakley and General Johnston may be the model for future operations. Second, it requires commanders to be politically astute. Major General Zinni commented that it is no longer enough to be strictly a military professional expert. "You are going to have to understand cultures and how to dissect them and analyze them. You are going to have to understand economics and you are going to have to understand politics."³ Military commanders are unlikely to develop this expertise unless it is encouraged by the services. One response would be to include international relations and coercion theory as required subjects in all professional military education courses.

Finally, airpower offers the ability to quickly escalate military operations from peace enforcement to limited war. This capability offers political and military leaders a powerful coercive edge. However, having the capability does not imply it should be used. The misuse of airpower in this way may actually escalate the fighting and overstep the ability of other coalition forces to survive or operate safely. This may well have been the case in Somalia when the UN forces decided to eliminate General Aideed as a factor in Somali politics. Strong reprisals are a good example of the difficulty of using offensive airpower. They should not be used unless the entire task force has the military capability to dominate any counter-escalation the enemy may attempt.

Peace enforcement requires the military to operate in the ill-defined gray area between peace and war. The nature of the mission requires military force to be used as psychological barriers rather than physical instruments of power. Airpower's main contribution to peace enforcement is to provide a powerful psychological coercive force which can complement ground forces and strong diplomacy. In the final analysis, the efficacy of airpower will depend more on the intellectual ability of the military leadership than on the brute strength of the force it can deliver.

Notes

1. A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, February 1995, 17.
2. The use of air strikes in April 1994 to halt the Bosnian Serb siege in Gorazde may be one counter example to this proposition. "NATO Aircraft Bomb Serbian Positions in Bosnia: Gorazde Advance Interrupted," Facts on File Yearbook, 1994 (New York: Facts on File Inc., 1995), 253.
3. Maj Gen Anthony C. Zinni, USMC, taped interview with Lt Col Robert P. Pelligrini, 28 February 1994. Major General Zinni was the UNITAF J3 and later a special assistant to Ambassador Oakley.

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