MOBILIZING FOR WAR IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses a fundamental question: from the perspective of the United States, what does it mean to mobilize for war at the beginning of the twenty-first century? In other words, what is the current form of mobilizing for war; what historical processes have contributed to it reaching this form; and what are the implications of this model of mobilization for the future? The question is addressed using a qualitative, interdisciplinary approach, with a structured, focused comparison of historical cases. The cases are selected from significant US wars and military commitments of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to illustrate the widest possible range of mobilization, from limited commitments to major wars.

This work clarifies the concept of mobilization on several levels. First, it confirms that dividing the concept into its constituent elements (mobilization of the military, mobilization of the economy and industry, and mobilization of the public) permits a more precise discussion of the topic. Second, it makes clear that after World War II, mobilization shifted from being a temporary, abnormal expedient during major wars to being a “less mobilized” but more permanent condition for distinct segments of society, while the public became less and less engaged. Third, it makes clear that despite this major transition, there were also significant continuities in mobilization
processes, particularly in mobilizing the public by characterizing threats as existential and the objectives and motivations for fighting in idealist terms. The analysis highlights the importance of a holistic understanding in creating policies and making decisions about mobilizing the country for war. “Mobilization” as developed during the period of industrialized warfare is no longer applicable to current strategic realities. However, the minimalist approach that has developed over the latter years of the Cold War to the present day is only marginally more useful. The vision of a middle way between these two extremes, focusing especially on engaging the American people, can lead to development of a mobilization concept that is useful both now and in the future.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As everyone understands, a work of this nature doesn’t reach a successful conclusion without the support of many people. Of primary importance has been my committee, whose contributions in time and thoughtful feedback far outweigh any compensation provided or gratitude I can express. Dr. Jay Parker got me off to a fine start with careful commentary on my proposal and an incredible list of potential research sources. Dr. Antulio Echevarria offered a military historian’s perspective and has asked just the right questions in his feedback on individual chapters. And Professor Joe Smaldone has been the ideal advisor and committee chair. His light hand on the reins allowed me to proceed at my own pace, working my way through the weeds until I found the path I needed. My sincere appreciation to these three gentlemen.

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A special thank-you to the ladies of our “ABD Support Group” (Liz, Anne, and Susan). As we’ve commented to each other, little did we know how much it would mean and what a great help it would be to all of us when we decided to get together once a month to talk about our progress and problems and challenges. Over these several years, acquaintances and classmates have become fast friends, and I am the richer for it.
Finally, my gratitude and appreciation to my mother, who put a book in my hands before I was old enough to do much more than gum the cardboard. Who could have foretold where the resulting love of reading was going to lead?
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On the fifth anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq, the *Washington Post* published an article quoting the views of various Iraqis and Americans on the war and its progress. Among them was a US Army officer, Paul Rieckhoff, who asserted that the “lack of public involvement … is unprecedented … And it’s my biggest criticism of the president. He has never asked the American people to do anything.”¹ Left unspecified in Rieckhoff’s critique was what exactly he wanted the president to ask the public to do. Rieckhoff was not alone in voicing such a complaint. Two years earlier, retired US Army Major General John Batiste had written, “Our leaders, including the Congress, must mobilize the American people, generate the required political will and provide the resources needed to win in Iraq.”² He, also, did not specify what he meant by “mobilizing” the people or what mechanisms he had in mind to generate political will.

While a faculty member at the National War College, I heard similar sentiments expressed by senior government leaders, students, and colleagues, who often observed that the United States or the American people had not been “mobilized” for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan or the larger “war on terror.”³ Yet, again, they never explained what actions they had in mind when they advocated mobilization.

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³ One speaker, for example, asserted that he “would be happy if the rest of the US government knew we were at war.” Because of the college’s non-attribution policy, these individuals cannot be quoted directly.
Such questions, complaints, and criticisms about mobilizing the country for war are not unique to the current day. In fact, the lack of clarity about mobilization stems at least from the end of World War II. At the beginning of the Korean War, both the military and the public assumed the nation would be mobilized along the same general pattern as for World War II, but the ambiguities and limited nature of that conflict quickly caused confusion, leading to discord between civilian and military leaders and loss of support for President Truman and the war. President Lyndon Johnson has also been severely criticized, especially by military leaders, for not mobilizing the American public and military reserve forces for the war in Vietnam. Harry Summers, a vocal critic of President Johnson, blamed the US failure in Vietnam primarily on the lack of a declaration of war and the unwillingness of the government to mobilize the American people. Other critics, while focusing less on the need to declare war, have echoed Summers’s argument, regarding mobilization as both a substantive and symbolic act.

Those who have complained about a lack of mobilization, whether in the current context or in analyzing Vietnam, are relying on a concept of mobilization based on the

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4 Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War (Novato CA: Presidio Press, 1982), 1, 5, 11-19. Summers’s work, written while he was an active duty Army colonel, was influential - widely distributed in its initial paperback form throughout the Department of Defense and also used as a textbook at many military educational institutions throughout the 1980s and 90s. Summers cites a host of senior Army officers who provided input and comments on the book, and it is to be presumed thereby also their approval of his ideas. See ix-xi.

Summers tied the act of mobilization directly to a formal declaration of war, which he described as an “outward manifestation of … the support and commitment of the American people.” He further emphasized the role of such a declaration in establishing legitimacy, creating responsibility, and focusing attention on subsequent actions. He was particularly adamant that it “makes the prosecution of the war a shared responsibility of the government and the American people.” See 17, 22, 37.

5 John S. Stuckey and Joseph H. Pistorius, “Mobilization for the Vietnam War: A Political and Military Catastrophe,” Parameters 15, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 36-7. They labeled “mobilization … an act of political will … mak[ing] commitment and determination real and visible to friends and foes alike … a conscious, concrete demonstration of firm resolve to achieve political objectives over a recognized and acknowledged enemy or threat.”
industrialized warfare of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. More specifically, they depend, whether implicitly or explicitly, on the “total” mobilization model of World War II as the standard against which all US wars seem to be measured. At the same time, they do not advocate a return to the mass armies of that period – a dichotomy that results in a lack of conceptual clarity regarding what it means to mobilize for war in the post-industrial age. While some make clear they have in mind mobilization as a symbolic act of national unity and a warning to enemies thus identified that “we are serious,” others, as noted, offer no explanation, and none offer specific prescriptions for action. This work is intended to correct this conceptual confusion by analyzing, from an American perspective, the nature of mobilizing for war at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

*The Historical Evolution of the Modern Concept of Mobilization*

To assess the meaning of mobilization for war in the current context, one must understand its conceptual foundations. The language of mobilization is an artifact of the industrialized warfare of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the concept can be traced to the *levée en masse* of the French revolution. Although the word itself was not used in the August 1793 declaration of the *levée en masse*, it is clear the French government intended to accomplish what we generally mean when we use the term today – the raising of an army and the focusing of national resources on winning a war.6

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6 *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860*, 1st ser., LXXII (Paris, 1907), 688-90; translated and quoted in John Shy, “Jomini,” in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 144-5. The key text reads: “From this moment until our enemies have been driven from the territory of the Republic, all Frenchmen are permanently requisitioned for military service. Young men will go forth to battle; married men will forge weapons and transport munitions; women will make tents and clothing; children will make bandages from old linen; and old men will be brought to the public squares to arouse the courage of the soldiers, while preaching the unity of the Republic and hatred against kings.”
The levée en masse was the first example of mobilization in the currently understood sense of the term, and its key characteristics carried forward in raising mass armies in Europe and the United States through the end of World War II. The levée was based on a new conception of the relationship between the state and its military forces – namely that the nation was comprised of its citizens, who held sovereign authority and thereby had acquired distinct responsibilities as well as rights. Included among those responsibilities was military service. The obligation was a nationalist clarion call, owed to fellow citizens and the nation, not the monarch. Of course, the government could not use all its citizens or even all male citizens in the army. The French approach again assumed a new formulation of the duties of citizens, beyond military service. The revolutionary government recognized the need to retain workers in agriculture; to allocate civilian labor to produce, collect, and transport supplies (in particular, uniforms, shoes and boots, and weapons); and to facilitate innovation in mechanization and the division of labor. In a precursor to World War II scrap drives, citizens were asked to seek out, collect, and contribute saltpeter for gunpowder production, since it could no longer be imported, and efforts were made to ensure women were involved in support of the war. In essence, the mobilization of the nation was a call to direct action.

The French revolution’s creation of mass armies motivated by popular ideology and nationalism, thus, became the foundation for the transformation of warfare in the

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8 Ibid., 15, 16-17, 17-19, 23.
modern era. It also laid the foundation for the modern concept of mobilization. In calling the nation to the war effort, the leaders of the revolution mobilized the public using a nationalist ideology. They mobilized a large portion of the nation’s manpower to serve in the military. And they mobilized France’s economy and industries to pay for and produce the weapons, ammunition, and equipment needed by those military forces. This model of mobilization evolved through the European wars of the nineteenth century and was eventually perfected to a level beyond that of other European nations by the Prussians. Its evolution through the American wars of the nineteenth century followed a similar, but not entirely parallel, path.

Aside from the Civil War, US wars of the century were quite limited, resulting in an emphasis on mobilizing military forces, with little need for expanded economic production or thorough engagement of the population. This was certainly the case with the War of 1812. The French Revolution had led to war between France and Britain, and the United States could not avoid its reach. Both nations attacked US vessels on the high seas. Opinion within the government and the general population was sharply divided, with Federalists taking a pro-British stance and Republicans favoring the French. After the victory at Trafalgar ensured her command of the sea, Britain became the primary threat to US trade, seizing more than 500 US ships between 1803 and 1807 and impressing hundreds of sailors. By 1812, with diplomatic measures having failed,

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9 This not to suggest that mobilizing a people or country for war has been limited to the modern era. Mobilization in one form or another has taken place throughout military history. This brief analysis is, however, limited to the evolution of mobilization for modern, industrialized warfare.
President James Madison requested a declaration of war, the House and Senate voted in favor, and the conflict officially began on 18 June.\textsuperscript{10}

Despite significant difficulties in mobilizing for the conflict, the United States managed to hold its position against the much greater power of Britain, ending the war with diplomatic agreement by both sides to restore the pre-war status quo. However, several notable naval victories early on (before Napoleon had surrendered and Britain turned the weight of its naval forces against the United States) plus the coincidence of Andrew Jackson’s victory at New Orleans (news of which arrived in the east at the same time as news of the end of the war) gave the appearance of another grand US victory over the preeminent European power. Consequently, the pattern of mobilization was set for the remainder of the century.

The war reinvigorated the militia system and validated the notion that minimal peacetime preparedness, coupled with a “call to the colors” in time of emergency, was adequate for defense of the nation. The very small standing Army would be expanded for war by use of militia forces and volunteers; the infrastructure of shipyards, arsenals, and coastal fortifications provided the backbone of defensive measures and some semblance of preparedness; and the small Navy would protect shipping and “show the flag.”\textsuperscript{11} On paper, military mobilization was impressive, with authorizations for the regular Army increased to 35,000 men and provisions for activation of 100,000 militia


\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 103, 119. On conversion of the war’s outcome into a grand American victory, see also Donald R. Hickey, The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 308-9. This work is a well-regarded history of the conflict.
and 50,000 federal volunteers. But the militia and volunteers had to be organized from scratch, the regulars had only 12,000 men, and the Navy had only 16 ships compared to Britain’s 1,000. Additionally, there were no administrative mechanisms available to organize and train the forces authorized.\textsuperscript{12} Financing was also chaotic. Of the approximately $119.5 million spent on the war, over half ($68.5 million) was borrowed at highly unfavorable rates.\textsuperscript{13} The Republican-controlled Congress initially refused to raise taxes, and when they finally did so in 1814, expenses still far exceeded revenues, leading to more borrowing. The government ultimately eked its way through the conflict, but it edged close to insolvency on more than one occasion.\textsuperscript{14} On the other hand, industrial production was generally able to meet war needs, especially ordnance production, which was largely self-sufficient.\textsuperscript{15} The most notable difficulties occurred with cloth production for uniforms because most textile production was in New England where opponents of the war refused to sell their products to the government.\textsuperscript{16}

The most significant obstacle to mobilization for the war arose from the deep divisions between the Federalists and Republicans. The Federalists, concentrated in

\textsuperscript{12} The War Department through the first half of 1812 consisted of the Secretary and seven clerks. The few officers leading the small, regular force were serving in scattered frontier outposts and had no experience training or leading larger units, and the existing regiments and battalions (few as they were) had no staff officers. Marvin A. Kreidburg and Merton G. Henry, \textit{History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945} (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1955), 43-7; Millett and Maslowski, \textit{Common Defense}, 107.


\textsuperscript{14} Hickey, \textit{War of 1812}, 122-3; on the refusal of the Congress to consider imposing taxes, see 118-9; also Koistinen, \textit{Plowshares into Swords}, 60.

\textsuperscript{15} Koistinen, \textit{Plowshares into Swords}, 63-4.

New England (the richest section of the country), were opposed to the war and refused to support it financially or call up their militias for federal service.\textsuperscript{17} Federalist opposition across the country was hardened and unified after a Republican mob in Baltimore savagely attacked the publishers of a pro-Federalist newspaper and other Federalists shortly after war was declared.\textsuperscript{18} With elites and opinion leaders so divided, the opportunity to generate widespread public support was significantly constrained.

The same mobilization pattern was followed with the war between the United States and Mexico (1846-1848).\textsuperscript{19} The expanded forces of the war of 1812 had been demobilized and the regular Army reduced to a maximum of 10,000 men. Despite rising tensions with Mexico in the early 1840s, there was no mobilization planning beyond general discussions of activating the militias and calling for volunteers.\textsuperscript{20} Once war was declared, the Army was again rapidly expanded by calling on state militias, raising

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{17} Millet and Maslowski, \textit{Common Defense}, 108.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Several individuals were murdered and many others suffered severe injuries while city, state, and militia officials refused to take action to quell the riots, which continued intermittently throughout the summer. Hickey, \textit{War of 1812}, 52-71. For details on the positions for and against the war of the various political factions, see 29-37 in the same work.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Recent scholarship discards the traditional labeling of this conflict as the “Mexican-American War” because it implies that Mexico was the primary aggressor in the conflict and because the term “Mexican-American” has become the label for an ethnic group. See Christopher Conway, ed., \textit{The U.S.-Mexican War: A Binational Reader} (Indianapolis IN: Hackett Publishing, 2010), xxvi and Ernesto Chávez, \textit{The U.S. War with Mexico: A Brief History with Documents} (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008), ix. Both of these works contain useful, especially Mexican, sources, with Conway’s having a broader collection. Chávez’s brief opening analysis of the war is one-sided and undocumented. Conway’s summary of the war and its context is much better.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Kreidberg and Henry, \textit{Military Mobilization}, 61, 64-7. Between these wars, the only significant thought to mobilization planning came from John C. Calhoun, who served as Secretary of War from 1817 to 1825. Calhoun proposed a plan in 1820 for a peacetime staff and “expansible” Army organization to plan for and facilitate rapid increases at the beginning of future conflicts. The plan had its weaknesses, not the least that the proposed cadre organization was ill-suited to geographically scattered skirmishing with Native Americans, but it was one of the few examples of thinking ahead prior to the twentieth century. In the event, the only part of his proposal adopted by Congress was the provision for reducing the Army from 12,664 men to 6,183.
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volunteers, and adding to the regular force – with the latter two measures incentivized by offering enlistment bonuses and land bounties.\footnote{Ibid., 70-7; Millet and Maslowski, \textit{Common Defense}, 149-50.}

The overall record of economic and industrial mobilization was positive – primarily because of the limited nature of the war and relative simplicity of weapons. The military could rely on existing government agencies and market forces, with no necessity for rapid or significant expansion of capacity. The only problematic shortages occurred in transportation resources – shallow-draft boats, animals, and wagons – which were eventually corrected, but the government paid exorbitant prices.\footnote{Kreidberg and Henry, \textit{Military Mobilization}, 77-9.} Financing the war was also accomplished without serious difficulties, with the approximately $76.5 million in total war costs paid for primarily through Treasury bonds.\footnote{For details on industrial and economic aspects of the war, see Koistinen, \textit{Plowshares into Swords}, 73-98.}

As with the War of 1812, public opinion was deeply divided. The dispute with Mexico over the status of Texas provided an excuse for expansionists to extend the conflict to other Mexican territories in the west under the doctrine of “Manifest Destiny.”\footnote{James K. Polk had run for president in 1844 on the Democratic plank of “re-occupying” Oregon and Texas – falsely implying both had once belonged to the US. The dispute with Britain over Oregon was settled by treaty. Millet and Maslowski, 144-5. For an influential and widely-read treatise on the reannexation argument that also clearly illustrates the ideology of manifest destiny, see “Robert Walker’s Argument for Reannexing Texas (1844) in Conway, \textit{U.S.-Mexican War}, 39-43. Walker served as a Democratic senator from Mississippi, 1836-41, and was a close adviser to Polk, serving as Treasury Secretary in 1844. The “manifest destiny” phrase was coined by John L. O’Sullivan, writing in favor of reannexation as editor of the \textit{United States Magazine and Democratic Review} in the July-August 1845 edition. See “Annexation” in Conway, \textit{U.S.-Mexican War}, 51-4.} On the other hand, four groups of opponents comprised a vocal antiwar movement: abolitionists opposed the conflict because they believed it would lead to an
extension of slavery; pacifists considered it a violation of Christian principles and morals; the Whig party considered it imperialist aggression; and a segment of the Democratic party led by Senator John C. Calhoun (SC) and former president Martin Van Buren opposed Polk, the expansion of slavery, and the expansion of executive power.\textsuperscript{25}

In sum, the war with Mexico resulted in no change to the US model of mobilizing for war.

It is only with the US Civil War that a recognizably modern mobilization process is evident. Even so, both sides started from almost nothing in mobilizing for war.\textsuperscript{26} President Abraham Lincoln followed established practice in activating the militia and calling for volunteers to expand the Union’s forces rapidly.\textsuperscript{27} By mid-1862, casualty rates and the geographical scope of operations made it clear that manpower requirements would far exceed the levels that government leaders had anticipated. Based on a liberal interpretation of a provision in the Militia Act of July 1862, Lincoln directed a draft of 300,000 militiamen on 4 August of that year, to be conducted by state governors. (The

\textsuperscript{25} Calhoun also hoped to use his opposition as a stepping stone to the presidency. Millet and Maslowski, \textit{Common Defense}, 146-7. For a detailed analysis of opposition to the war, see John H. Schroeder, \textit{Mr. Polk’s War: American Opposition and Dissent, 1846-1848} (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973). For analysis of Calhoun’s role, see Ernest McPherson Lander, Jr., \textit{Reluctant Imperialists: Calhoun, the South Carolinians, and the Mexican War} (Baton Rouge LA: Louisiana University Press, 1980).

\textsuperscript{26} The regular Army of around 16,300 was seldom assembled in units of battalion strength, let alone larger, and the various companies were scattered all over the country. On paper the militia was a formidable force of over 3.1 million, but this count was of dubious value since many states had not reported their rosters to the federal government in years. More importantly, the militia was militarily ineffective as drill requirements were often ignored or devolved into social occasions. Kreidberg and Henry, \textit{Military Mobilization}, 88-90.

\textsuperscript{27} For details on Lincoln’s activation of the militia and calls for volunteers, see Ibid., 90-103; also Millet and Maslowski, \textit{Common Defense}, 174-5.
Confederate congress had passed a draft law on 16 April 1862.\(^28\) Reacting to riots in Wisconsin and unrest in Pennsylvania, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton allowed the governors to postpone implementation for a month, then indefinitely. Ultimately, Lincoln’s directive was never implemented, but it served as the first step in establishing the federal government’s right to compel service.\(^29\)

Congress passed an actual draft law in March of 1863, requiring service of all male citizens 20 to 45 years of age (with substitutions and commutations permitted). The draft was administered by military officers with enrollment accomplished by going house to house. When this process began in the summer of 1863, the enrollment officers met immediate resistance, and opposition to the draft culminated in four days of rioting in New York City with regular Army troops finally called in to restore order. Given this degree of resistance, the draft was mostly ineffective, and the Union continued to rely on volunteers.\(^30\)

The scope of the war also required a higher level of resources, both material and financial, than previous US conflicts. In this regard, the North had distinct advantages over the South. For example, the North possessed 110,000 manufacturing facilities in 1860, compared with the South’s 18,000, many of which were concentrated in vulnerable coastal cities and the northern border states. The North had similar

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\(^28\) The South, out of greater necessity, implemented one modern innovation that was neglected by the North. The Confederate draft law had provisions for exemptions of river and railroad transportation workers, miners, foundry workers, telegraph operators, printers, and some employees of wool and cotton mills. These provisions anticipated the selective service acts of the twentieth century in attempting to manage manpower requirements across the spectrum of wartime needs. Kreidberg and Henry, *Military Mobilization*, 134-7.

\(^29\) Ibid., 103-4.

\(^30\) Ibid., 104-9.
advantages in railroad track, production facilities for rails and rolling stock, and water and wagon transport. Finally, the emphasis on states rights as the governing philosophy of the Confederacy resulted in significant impediments to wartime efficiency, and President Jefferson Davis was reluctant to use even those few centralized powers he had been granted. Lincoln, in contrast, was never hesitant to use or even expand the powers of the federal government.\textsuperscript{31}

As might be expected given the lack of prior planning, the early days of northern economic mobilization were disorganized, inept, and piecemeal.\textsuperscript{32} The financial requirements of the war led to a greater degree of taxation than at any previous time in US history. Congress took the lead, going far beyond the cautious recommendations of Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase. It passed the first national income tax in 1861, raised taxes in July 1862, and passed additional tax legislation in each year of the war. Even though the tax system was both efficient and effective, the Lincoln administration still needed to borrow on a massive scale. Since the Treasury did not have the expertise to manage such an effort, Jay Cooke and Company (a private Philadelphia bank) was hired as the sole agent for bond sales. Cooke was innovative and, in a harbinger of things to come, mounted a nationwide sales campaign based on advertising and a network of sales agents. Although lack of planning led to “muddling through” at times,

\textsuperscript{31} These details are discussed in Millet and Maslowski, \textit{Common Defense}, 163-8.

\textsuperscript{32} Kreidberg and Henry, \textit{Military Mobilization}, 123. As Koistinen points out, the lack of industrialization in the South mandated an entirely different approach to mobilization than in the North, and he labels Southern economic mobilization a “general failure.” Consequently, I do not regard Southern economic mobilization as a waypoint in the general evolution of mobilization and will not discuss it here. For detailed analysis of Southern economic mobilization, see Koistinen, \textit{Plowshares into Swords}, 198-281.
given the unprecedented requirements of the war, the North’s economic/industrial mobilization was a resounding success.\textsuperscript{33}

The engagement of the soldiers, as well as the general public, on both sides relied on a significant ideological component and nationalist impulses. In the North, most soldiers felt the ideals of democracy and liberty were under grave threat, and roughly ten percent were also devoted to abolishing slavery.\textsuperscript{34} The southern rebels were as committed to their cause.\textsuperscript{35} This ideological commitment and the nature of each side’s objectives precluded compromise and ensured a protracted conflict. As a result, numbers of men and quantities of war materiel became significantly more important than in previous conflicts.

The consequences arising from this factor foreshadowed the nature of the industrialized wars of the twentieth century. This war saw the federal government mandating military service as an obligation of citizenship to the nation (rather than to communities or states as was the case with the militia and the volunteers).\textsuperscript{36} The need for masses of men on the battlefield, coupled with the protracted fighting and high casualty rates, created a need for constant replenishment of men and their equipment. This requirement, in turn, meant that a large portion of the general society had to be put on a war footing. Additionally, the scale of mobilization coupled with the strategic and

\textsuperscript{33} This discussion of economic mobilization is based on Koistinen, \textit{Plowshares into Swords}, 182-8.


\textsuperscript{35} James McPherson, “American Victory, American Defeat,” in Boritt, 30-3. McPherson claims that southern expressions of devotion to their cause and nationalism were much stronger than northern.

\textsuperscript{36} Kreidberg and Henry, \textit{Military Mobilization}, 109.
logistical requirements led to requirements for centralized government controls on an unprecedented level, putting a premium on administrative expertise and bureaucratic processes. The Civil War was, thus, a harbinger of things to come in terms of mobilization, highlighting the development of mass armies, the importance of industrial capacity to the generation of combat power, and the consequent importance of broad societal support.

In the United States, however, these precedents had little impact through the remainder of the century. Rapidly demobilized after the Civil War, the Army’s focus returned to conflict with Native American tribes on the frontier, with small garrisons scattered around the country.37 The lessons necessary for industrial warfare were, for the most part, lost. Consequently, the beginning of the Spanish-American War saw government and military leaders scrambling once again to reinvent national mobilization processes. On 15 February 1898 the battleship USS Maine exploded while at anchor in Havana Harbor. A Navy inquiry concluded a mine caused the explosion, and the American public was outraged.38 Cubans had been fighting for their independence from Spain since 1895, and US opinion was sympathetic to their cause. The conflict had also

37 Ibid., 140.
38 The first investigation, hampered by lack of technical expertise and the fact that the wreckage was under water, lasted four weeks. A subsequent investigation in 1911, in which the wreckage was exposed by building a cofferdam around it, also concluded the initial explosion was caused by a mine. However, other experts disputed these conclusions at the time, suggesting the most likely cause was the spontaneous combustion of coal dust in the bunker beside the forward ammunition magazine. Admiral Hyman Rickover, using modern analytical techniques and explosives experts, in 1976 published his conclusion that the explosion originated internally, most likely in the coal bunker, but some historians continue to disagree. There is no definitive evidence regarding the cause of the explosion, but most modern-day analysts agree the original attribution of an external mine explosion is unlikely. “The Destruction of USS Maine,” Department of the Navy, Naval History and Heritage Command, http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq71-1.htm (accessed 9 January 2012).
disrupted trade, and expansionists viewed it as an opportunity to enlarge the nation’s role on the international stage. These elements coalesced into pressure for war.

Subsequently, President William McKinley requested authority from Congress to “intervene” in Cuba on 11 April; and on 25 April, they passed a declaration that a state of war had existed as of 21 April.40

The regular Army of 28,200 was posted in 80 locations around the country, with most in small units in the West. As was the norm, there was no mobilization planning and no organization within the military or government charged with organizing and executing military mobilization. The result was the same sort of chaotic floundering that had occurred in all the previous wars of the nineteenth century. The regular forces were too small and scattered, the militia/National Guard was ill-trained and ill-equipped, and the government therefore needed to call for volunteers.41

The economic capacity of the country was more than adequate to support the demands of this brief conflict. The approximately $250 million in total costs was financed without difficulty through “miscellaneous minor taxes” and bonds. Secretary of the Navy John D. Long and uniformed naval leaders minimized corruption and profiteering by centralizing procurement and managed acquisitions through the navy yards, contracts with private suppliers, and open market purchases. Army mobilization

39 For a recent well-regarded study of the imperialist/internationalist impulse, see Evan Thomas, The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst and the Rush to Empire, 1898 (New York: Little, Brown, 2010).


41 For details on the organizational and administrative gyrations necessary to increase the regular Army, activate the National Guard, and raise the volunteers (including 16 “special volunteer units” such as the “Rough Riders” 1st Regiment US Volunteer Cavalry) and meld them into an Army, see Kreidberg and Henry, Military Mobilization, 150-65; also Millet and Maslowski, Common Defense, 286-92.
was much more problematic as the necessary expansion was considerably greater than for the Navy, and neither Secretary of War Russell Alger nor commanding general Nelson Miles was up to the task of leading and managing the process. Major failures occurred in the distribution and transportation system (rail, wagons, and ships). The Army managed to deploy to Cuba and the Philippines, but its success in the war was based on furious improvisation, a “brute force” approach to solving problems (for example, overcoming a lack of landing craft by shoving officers’ horses over the sides of transport ships and allowing them to swim to shore), and the ineptitude of the Spanish foe.

The government and press approach to public opinion regarding the war marked the first glimmerings of a modern mobilization campaign. President McKinley was adept at using the new tools of mass communication. He was the first president to have a staff member meet with reporters on a daily basis. His staff monitored press coverage from around the country, and newspaper and wire service reporters began to congregate within and outside the White House. The intense competition between publishers, especially William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, led to an emphasis on sensationalism (the so-called “yellow journalism” of the time) that fueled public outrage against Spain.

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43 Susan A. Brewer, *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15, 18-9. Earlier interpretations portray McKinley, who had served in the Civil War, as reluctant to go to war against Spain (see for example, Millett and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, 285), but Brewer discounts claims that he was “forced” into war. Robert P. Saldin also argues that contrary to received wisdom, McKinley did make a concerted effort to influence public opinion in support of the war, especially the subsequent campaign in the Philippines, thus marking the beginning of the shift to the “rhetorical presidency.” See his “William McKinley and the Rhetorical
Despite its brevity, then, the Spanish-American War was an important waypoint in the evolution of US mobilization processes. It showed that even so recently after the end of the Civil War, north and south would fight together – highlighting the importance of creating national sentiment. It also highlighted the strengthening bonds between political, military, and business leaders in managing the rapid technological changes necessary for modern, industrialized warfare. These changes were particularly evident in keeping up with and financing the advances in naval guns, steam propulsion, and steel vessels in the late 1800s to early 1900s when these leaders came together in a “production team” to improve and maintain the Navy’s modernity. Although the Army made some strides in modernizing its organization, it lagged behind the Navy in learning the lessons necessary to mobilize for modern war – either from its own experiences or those of European militaries. Consequently, it, again, had to start almost from scratch when faced with the much greater requirements of mobilizing for World War I.

This brief summary of the evolution of US mobilization in the nineteenth century permits the identification of three specific elements comprising a basic framework for analysis. First is the mobilization of massed manpower to serve in the military forces. Second is the mobilization of national economies and industries to pay for and produce the mass of weapons, ammunition, and equipment needed by those military forces.

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44 On this point, see Koistinen, *Mobilizing for Modern War*, 4, 48-55. He discusses this cooperative relationship as the origins of the military-industrial complex; see 55-7.
Third is the mobilization of public support based on nationalist or other ideological sentiment.

The Literature of Mobilization

Research and analysis of the topic of mobilization has tended to be narrowly focused – often on one of these three elements or a single historical example or even narrower sub-topics. Within the literature of modern, industrialized warfare there are many specialized histories covering various aspects of mobilization or specific mobilization organizations. Typical of this approach is Paul Koistinen’s examination of the political economy of American warfare. Other examples of this type of work include the following: John Whiteclay Chambers analysis of US mobilization for World War I through the lens of raising a large conscript army; Alan Winkler’s examination of the details of the World War II Office of War information; and Andrew Grossman’s well-argued examination of the effect of government policies on American society and home front mobilization during the early Cold War. For an example of a more

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45 Koistinen’s work is essential, comprising four volumes, with the fifth in progress, covering this topic from 1606 through the end of the Cold War. In addition to the two volumes cited previously, see Paul A.C. Koistinen, Planning War, Pursuing Peace: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1920-1939 (Lawrence KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998) and Arsenal of World War II: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1940-1945 (Lawrence KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004).


narrowly structured, detailed analysis, see Thomas Christie and Andrew Clark’s work on depictions of World War II enemies in American film.\footnote{Thomas B. Christie and Andrew M. Clark, “Framing Two Enemies in Mass Media: A Content Analysis of U.S. Government Influence in American Film during World War II,” \textit{American Journalism} 25, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 55-72.}

Beyond academic treatment of the topic, there has been a large body of work driven by government or military interests, often with the goal of analyzing lessons learned from the past and preparing for future mobilizations. A foremost exemplar of this type of work is the previously cited \textit{History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945} by Army officers Marvin Kreidberg and Merton Henry. R. Elberton Smith’s \textit{The Army and Economic Mobilization} is also typical of this genre.\footnote{R. Elberton Smith, \textit{The Army and Economic Mobilization} (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1985). This work is one volume of the extensive and highly detailed series on the US Army in World War II.} The period between the world wars marked a heightened interest in mobilization topics, especially as it became likely that the United States would once more be drawn into conflict. In 1940 Tobin and Bidwell, for example, produced a holistic examination of planning for total war based on the military’s 1939 mobilization plan.\footnote{Harold J. Tobin and Percy W. Bidwell, \textit{Mobilizing America} (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1940). Topics discussed include propaganda and censorship, the armed forces, industrial labor, business, price and profit controls, and the economics of procurement planning.} After the end of World War II, the attention to mobilization issues from government quarters gradually waned as the nuclear stand-off with the Soviet Union implied that the next major war would be a “come as you are” affair and the limited nature of conflicts engaged in by the United States required much less mobilization of any kind.\footnote{With a large standing military buttressed by large reserve forces and the general public consensus supporting containment of the Soviets and China, the primary focus of post-WW II mobilization studies was the defense-industrial base. See, for example, Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. and Uri Ra’anani, eds., \textit{The...}}
War, interest declined even more precipitously, with the few works produced taking a somewhat broader view of mobilization or focused on the effects of globalization.\(^{53}\)

In recent years, historians have continued to mine the archives in producing all manner of specialized analyses. An example is the work on the mobilization of women during World War II by Mei-Lang Yang.\(^{54}\) However, the richest vein of recent scholarship has been devoted to the mobilization of public support for war. Among general works in this category, Susan Brewer’s *Why America Fights* is an important examination of US government efforts to mobilize public support for war across six conflicts.\(^{55}\) Other relevant works devoted to the topic of public support include Steven

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55 Brewer, *Why America Fights*. She analyzes the Philippines (1898-1902), World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Another work that examines a number of representative cases is Jon Western, *Selling Intervention and War: The Presidency, the Media, and the American Public* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).
Rosenstone and John Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* and Eric Larson and Bogdan Savych’s analysis of public support for late-twentieth century military operations. The 2003 US invasion of Iraq is the subject of a number of more specialized analyses, primarily motivated by the controversy surrounding the Bush administration’s justification for the war. Among them, Deborah Jaramillo’s *Ugly War, Pretty Package* and Paul Rutherford’s *Weapons of Mass Persuasion* are noteworthy.

Such narrowly circumscribed works are essential to garnering depth of understanding, but in studying the narrow slices, a sense of the overarching picture can be lost, and there is a tendency to assume agreement on the basic conceptual meaning of mobilization. More importantly, it is also assumed, sometimes explicitly, more often implicitly, that for a democracy like the United States to go to war, the government must “mobilize the nation.” There is, however, no theory or precise language of mobilization that allows scholars, policymakers, military leaders, and the public to agree on what it means to mobilize for war. Moreover, although scholars and others have studied

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mobilization in depth from these narrow perspectives, there are no fundamental organizing principles or frameworks for understanding mobilization in a holistic sense.\(^{58}\)

As a result, there is little foundation for analysis beyond an implicit assumption that some form of mobilization is necessary to achieving the nation’s objectives in war.

**Research Objectives and Methodology**

This research addresses a fundamental question: from the perspective of the United States, what does it mean to mobilize for war at the beginning of the twenty-first century? Or to put the research problem more directly: what is the current form of mobilizing for war; what historical processes have contributed to it reaching this form; and what are the implications of this model of mobilization for the future? In analyzing these questions, it addresses the weaknesses highlighted above by validating a framework for understanding the concept of mobilization that transcends a specific historical context.

This work is important in terms of correcting this weakness in the academic literature, but its value also rests on the criticisms highlighted at the beginning of this chapter. The issue of mobilizing for war is not merely a technical matter of raising armies and producing war materials. Most fundamentally, mobilization is a question of

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\(^{58}\) William C. Martel in *Victory in War: Foundations of Modern Military Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) offers a rather circumscribed framework of mobilization as one element in his analysis of the concept of victory, but his less than two-page explanation is not an in-depth discussion of the topic (nor is it intended to be). See 94-5, 100-1.


Other scholars have completed in-depth analyses of specific instances of mobilization while assuming a general conceptual understanding of mobilization and eschewing any need for formal definitions or models. See Grossman, cited previously, and Paul Pierpaoli, “The Price of Peace: The Korean War Mobilization and Cold War Rearmament, 1950-1953” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1995).
how the nation-state, as a collective body, sanctions the use of violence on its behalf. For what reasons is the nation willing to go to war? How is war justified, especially domestically? Mobilization is also a question of whether war is a commitment of the nation or of just a few of its members. If military service is an employment choice rather than an obligation of citizenship (an act of mobilization), how does the larger society “support” those who kill and are killed in its name? Finally, mobilization is a question of democratic values. If mobilization is minimal, how is oversight of the executive’s commitment of the nation’s lives and treasure maintained? These questions and their answers highlight the fact that fundamental human and societal values are at stake.

This research uses a deliberately interdisciplinary method – not only because such an approach is the foundation of this doctoral program, but also because an effective examination of the topic requires it. The overarching methodology is qualitative in nature, using a melding of historical narrative and selected, generalized political science methods. Specifically (and as explained in more detail below), historical cases are examined using a set of analytical variables that permit cross-case comparisons. This dual method will be reinforced by using other resources and perspectives as they prove relevant, primarily from the disciplines of sociology and economics. It is inevitable that this type of analysis loses the depth that is typical of historical research, especially the specific characteristics that make each case unique. At the same time, the disciplinary rigor that is typical of a “pure” political science

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59 On this point see Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2005), 225.
method is also weakened to some degree. These disciplinary limitations are offset by the explanatory richness gained with an interdisciplinary approach.60

This analysis will use a structured, focused comparison of cases to examine the processes of mobilization.61 The cases are selected from significant US wars and military commitments of the twentieth century to illustrate the widest possible range of mobilization, from limited or minimal mobilization for commitments such as peacekeeping in Bosnia to large-scale mobilization for major conflicts such as World War II. The selection is small enough to be manageable, while at the same time being illustrative of a range of mobilization processes and decisions wide enough to create a meaningful framework of understanding.

The cases are organized chronologically as follows:

- World War I in chapter 2 and World War II in chapter 3 to illustrate mobilization for major war.
- The Cold War in chapter 4 to illustrate the special case of “continuous” mobilization. Brief discussion of the Korean and Vietnam wars will be included where relevant.
- Chapter 5 covers mobilization for the limited wars of the 1990s, with discussion of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the humanitarian commitment to Somalia, and the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Kosovo.
- Chapter 6 then treats the nature of mobilization for the ongoing war on terror, to include the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

60 George and Bennett repeatedly emphasize the practical value to policy makers of case study analysis that combines historical and political science methods. See especially chapters 10 and 12.

61 George and Bennett, Case Studies, 67. The research is structured in that the same general questions are addressed with each case, thus providing a means to standardize the collection of relevant information and allowing “systematic comparison and cumulation” of case findings. The research is focused in that only selected aspects of the cases are used. The overall goal is to analyze historical phenomena in “ways that yield useful generic knowledge” and, in particular, will lead from cumulated case explanations to broader generalizations.
The three elements of mobilization (military forces, economy and industry, and the public) comprise a general conceptual model. Each case is examined using the following general questions, derived from the three elements, which are thereby treated as analytical variables.

- What were the government’s motivations and objectives in going to war?
  - Who or what was identified as the enemy or threat and how serious was it considered to be?
  - What level of effort was anticipated to be required?

- What changes or variations in warfare are observed with this case?
  - What types of military operations were conducted and how extensive were they?
  - What form of military force was deemed necessary/used to achieve the stated objectives?
  - What mechanisms were in place or created to raise the necessary military force?

- What steps did the government take to influence and control the economy and industry?
  - Did the government manage manpower allocation between the military forces and essential home-front production? If so, how?
  - Were there incentives for war goods production; if so, what were they?
  - Did the government attempt to control consumption (e.g., of critical raw materials or foodstuffs)? Voluntary restrictions or rationing?
  - How did the government finance the war?

- How did the government try to create public support for the war?
  - What were the key points of the government’s message? How were the enemy and threat described?
  - How effectively did the government convey/control its message?
  - How did the government react to opposition?

The within-case and between-case breadth of this approach leads inevitably to analytical complexity. The cases highlight the multiple strategies and processes of mobilizing for war, as well as the multi-faceted interactions among the variables. The analytical complexity is increased further by the fact that the actors within each category
of variable cannot be assumed to be rational or unitary. Their motivations, values and beliefs, risk assessment, perceptions of events, and judgments regarding appropriate policy choices are all highly variable.62

Analytical complexity is also increased because assessing the level of public mobilization becomes problematic in the later cases. During World War II, positive acts such as participating in scrap drives, growing victory gardens, accepting rationing, and taking jobs in defense industries served as indicators of public mobilization. With cases after World War II, one must depend primarily on polling results, because there are few overt actions that can serve as indicators of public mobilization.

At the same time, caution is necessary when relying on polling results, not only because simply holding an opinion is inherently different than being asked to do or sacrifice something, but also because poll results are questionable as indicators of public sentiment. This problem is a result of poll responses being significantly sensitive to question wording and, in some cases, question context. For example, when people were surveyed about the possibility of going to war in the Persian Gulf, responses varied widely depending on whether the question asked about “going to war,” “engaging in combat,” or “using military force.” Polling data is most useful when examined comparatively, in one of four possible ways: comparison with expectations, comparisons over time (generally the most useful), comparisons of subgroups, and comparisons of differently worded questions.63

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62 The dangers of assuming unity and rationality are highlighted by George and Bennett, *Case Studies*, 273.

Nancy Bernhard highlights another difficulty with polling results by noting that assessments of government information programs are often presented as singularities – cause and effect relationships between a simplified statement of policy and a single notion of public opinion (for example, approval or disapproval). The reality, of course, is that the issues and policies are complex and multidimensional, and it is difficult to separate preexisting public sentiment or the effects of other cultural sources from the effects of public information campaigns. Nevertheless, since there is nothing else available, polling data will be used as the primary indicator of public mobilization after World War II – with these cautions in mind, and with a focus on trend data where possible.

Because a major focus of this research is the mechanisms of mobilization, process tracing is an obvious analytical tool. However, most forms of process tracing are centered on identifying causal variables and deriving causal explanations. The breadth and complexity of the cases chosen for this study preclude such an approach. George and Bennett, however, describe a different form of process tracing in which the researcher “constructs a general explanation rather than a detailed tracing of a causal process.” This form can be appropriate when the research objective is better served by a higher level of abstraction or when detailed explanations are impossible because the

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address this issue, examining question wording in polls on both Iraq wars and identifying which words influence the polls in which direction. See their “Framing Effects on Public Opinion During Prewar and Major Combat Phases of the U.S. War with Iraq,” Social Science Quarterly 89, no. 2 (June 2008): 502-22.

necessary laws, theory, and data are absent.\textsuperscript{65} Such is the case with this research, and so the relatively high level of abstraction and generalization used in this study is designed to contribute to the advancement of thinking about mobilizing for war by clarifying and refining concepts and analytical frameworks.

An analytical framework is desirable for a number of reasons. First, it provides a means for scholars and policymakers to discuss the topic in a systematic fashion. Second, it offers those who complain about a lack of mobilization a means to clarify their explanations and expectations. Third, it provides a means of clarifying the commitment required of the nation when the government advocates going to war. Finally, it provides a means of clarifying assumptions about the necessity of mobilizing for war. Such a framework is not necessarily definitive in its treatment of the topic. The goal is not to create a theory with predictive value. Instead, it is to identify underlying social forces, policy mismatches or failures, and opportunities to improve mobilization mechanisms in the future.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{65} On this general form of process tracing, see George and Bennett, \textit{Case Studies}, 211. For description of the varieties of process tracing, see 210-11.

\textsuperscript{66} See Ibid., 282-5, for a discussion of scholarly contributions to policymaking.
CHAPTER 2

WORLD WAR I AND MOBILIZATION FOR INDUSTRIAL WAR

The United States and the nations of Europe coped with the characteristics of industrialized warfare differently “because the practice of war – its sociology and political economy – reflected different national modes of mobilizing society and economy and of organizing the use of force.”

Indeed, the United States came somewhat late to the transition to this industrialized form of warfare. After the Civil War, it did not follow the European model of creating ever-larger military forces comprising mobilizable reserve formations based on near-universal peacetime conscription and training. Neither did it develop the necessary large-scale arms industries and mobilization plans that were necessary to bring such forces into action. Thus, although US mobilization for the Great War was similar to its European counterparts, there were significant differences. For example, there were fewer direct controls over the war economy, and conscription was palatable to the American public only when presented as a wartime expedient, to be discontinued as soon as the fighting ended. In these aspects, and many others, the national effort to create and deploy military power to the battlefields of Europe created a mindset within the US government, the military, and the public regarding the processes and justification of mobilizing for war that formed the foundation for future mobilizations.

When the great powers of Europe went to war in the summer of 1914, most Americans were convinced it was not their concern and were firmly resolved to remain uninvolved. As the war dragged on, President Woodrow Wilson was torn regarding the

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question of US participation. American businesses and industries had been involved from the beginning, providing financial resources and producing arms and ammunition for both sides. But the preponderance of support was provided to the Triple Entente (France, Russia, and Great Britain), especially as the British naval blockade effectively choked off commerce with Germany and the other Central Powers. Ultimately, faced with the German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 and the growing conviction that the United States could and should play a role in ending the fighting and establishing a just peace, the president asked Congress for a declaration of war.

**Threats and Objectives**

Wilson’s war message to Congress, coupled with his famous “Fourteen Points” speech the following year, justified the United States’ entry in the war and explained the nation’s objectives. He focused his words on two themes – the treachery of Germany as a threat, not only to the United States but the entire world, and the altruism of American goals. He characterized German actions as a “war against mankind … against all nations.” He emphasized the US goal was not simply to seek revenge for submarine attacks and vowed the United States would fight for the liberty of all the people of the world. He declared, “For the rights of nations great and small … The world must be made safe for democracy.” He also made clear the level of effort that would be required of the nation, calling for the immediate “organization and mobilization of all the material resources of the country.”

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Congress again in January of 1918, outlining his “Fourteen Points” for a peace process to end the war. Using the same expansive rhetoric, he avowed, “We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secured once and for all against their recurrence.”

The Military Context

Wilson’s expansive rhetoric matched the expansiveness of the conflict, which, indeed, had become a world war. The fighting was spread from the Eastern Front in Russia and Poland, around to Southeast Europe and the Balkans, to the Italian Front in the south, and the Western Front in France and Belgium. There was also significant combat in the Middle East, plus conflict over the African colonies, and Japan even joined the Entente – as a means to seize German colonies in the Far East. There were isolated naval engagements around the globe as well. However, the primary naval theater was the Atlantic, where the German U-boats tried to knock Britain out of the war by cutting off the flow of both military and food supplies and the British Royal Navy enforced a blockade of commerce to Germany that eventually brought the civilian population to the brink of starvation. American contributions to the fighting consisted primarily of naval and merchant operations in the Atlantic and ground troops on the Western Front.

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4 For good summaries of the scope of the war, see J.M. Winter, The Experience of World War I (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) and Larry H. Addington, The Patterns of War since the Eighteenth
Land combat depended heavily on masses of infantry, supported by massed artillery fire and equipped by the fully realized mass production capacity of the industrial revolution. The war saw the early mechanization of land forces, with trucks used to move troops and supplies, and as the war progressed, armored vehicles. The conflict was also the occasion for the first large-scale application of airpower to warfare – initially used for observation and artillery spotting and quickly evolving to air-to-air combat, ground attack, and limited campaigns of strategic bombardment. Operations on the Eastern Front were consistently more mobile than in southern Europe or the Western Front – where, famously, the massive armies bogged down in a system of trenches extending from the Swiss border to the English Channel and “progress” was often measured in yards. The killing power of machine guns and, especially, artillery led to casualties on a staggering scale. Both sides spent the majority of the war trying to solve the tactical deadlock in the west, with the Germans, quickly followed by the Entente, early-on resorting to poison gas, the Entente focusing on a technological solution in the development of tanks, and the German use of pioneering infiltration tactics later in the war. Despite some successes with these innovations, none of them was decisive, and ultimately, the Germans exhausted themselves while their opponents were strengthened by the addition of American forces.\(^5\)

The nature of the land combat, particularly the rate of casualties incurred during offensive operations, put a premium on generating and constantly replenishing massive armies. Once the United States entered the war (as an “associated power” rather than an ally of the Entente), the key requirement was to generate military manpower in sufficient quantities to tip the balance against the Central Powers on the Western front. The pre-war debate leading to approval of language in the National Defense Act of 1916 stipulating existence of a “universal militia” had laid the groundwork for the mobilization of 1917. In his war message, President Wilson called for achieving the necessary expansion of US military forces through conscription. After the declaration of war, Congress passed the Selective Service Act, authorizing him to activate for federal service all reserve elements of the US military for the duration of the war and to organize, train, and equip 500,000 additional enlisted soldiers by means of a national draft, with authority to raise an additional 500,000 men at his discretion. (Subsequent legislation authorized additional levies.) The conscripted men were to be raised by a selective process from all male citizens (and male persons, not enemy aliens, who had declared their intention to become citizens) between the ages of 21 and 30, with


provisions for selective exemption of persons employed in industries or agriculture necessary to the maintenance of military capability or other vital national interests. Draft boards comprising citizens from each local area who had no official connection to the military were to administer the process.⁷

Industry and the Economy

As this mass army was mobilized, the nation’s industry and economy also had to be mobilized to produce and transport the arms, ammunition, and equipment it would need to fight on the battlefields across an ocean. The provisions of the Selective Service Act of 1917 and its subsequent implementing regulations recognized that national manpower would have to be managed effectively to sustain the required level of industrial production while at the same time inducting the numbers of men required for a mass army. Both military and civilian leaders understood that military expansion should not be allowed to disrupt production. To accomplish this goal, the act permitted exemptions and deferments as noted above.⁸

The government subsequently acted to ensure the employment of as many able-bodied men as possible directly in the war effort. Under pressure from both the industrial and agriculture sectors for help in maintaining production, and hoping to retain support from the American Federation of Labor by fending off demands for labor conscription or national service, the Selective Service Administration issued a “Work or


⁸ Kreidberg and Henry, Military Mobilization, 271.
Fight” Order on 17 May 1918. Highly popular with business leaders and industrialists, as well as those men already in military service, this directive gave local draft boards the authority to revoke the deferments of those men considered “idle” or working in “nonproductive” occupations.\(^9\) All told, the United States was reasonably successful in mobilizing the civilian work force for wartime production, but this outcome was due more to the vast untapped potential of the economy than to direct, effective management of the labor supply. In particular, the selective service system did not operate as efficiently as it might have in allocating manpower between the military and critical defense industries.

In addition to ensuring labor was adequately managed, the government also had to ensure industrial and agricultural output would meet its wartime needs. While military and government leaders were well aware of the basic link between industrial production and military power, no one had a firm grasp on what would be required over how much time, or even what latent capacities were available.\(^10\) The National Defense Act of August 1916 had advanced the nation a few steps toward economic mobilization by requiring manufacturers to give precedence to government orders for military material, authorizing the president to appoint a board on mobilization of industries, and


\(^10\) Kreidberg and Henry, *Military Mobilization*, 310; David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 98. This is not to say, however, that military and government leaders were completely unaware of the link between industrial production and military power. The Navy had taken the first step toward military-industry cooperation and economic mobilization by establishing the Naval Consulting Board in 1915. This board then established a subordinate entity, the Industrial Preparedness Committee, which asked the five largest US engineering societies to assess industrial war production capacity across the country. They found limited interest in industrial preparedness, and the information gathered was of little use because there was no guidance regarding what kind of specific information was needed and no perspective on what level of production might be needed. See Koistinen, *Mobilizing for Modern War*, 147-50 and Kreidburg and Henry, 337.
directing the Secretary of War to conduct an inventory of military manufacturing capacity.\(^{11}\) Another limited but important step toward economic mobilization was establishment of the Council of National Defense and its advisory commission, “for the coordination of industries and resources for the national security and welfare.” However, the council and commission accomplished little of actual substance before the US entered the war.\(^{12}\) In addition to these formal, however limited, preparations, exports of war material and private US financial firms’ support to the Entente constituted another avenue by which the foundation was laid for economic and industrial mobilization in the United States.\(^{13}\) The basic lack of information about the economy further heightened uncertainty as the United States readied for war. Data regarding

\(^{11}\) The secretary was also directed to report to Congress by 1 January 1917 on existing government owned or operated manufacturing facilities for arms, munitions, and equipment; a comparison of costs and benefits to the government of civilian vs. government manufacturing; and a recommendation on whether government manufacturing should be expanded. US Congress, Statutes at Large, December 1915-March 1917, Vol XXXIX, Part 1, Public Law 64-85, 64\(^{th}\) Cong., 1\(^{st}\) sess., “An Act: For making further and more effectual provision for the national defense, and for other purposes,” 3 June 1916, 213-15. As the Congress began the first tentative steps toward economic mobilization, Koistinen, Mobilizing for Modern War, 153, notes that very few members evinced any interest, and fewer had any expertise, in the topic.

\(^{12}\) The members were specified as the Secretaries of War, Navy, Interior, Agriculture, and Labor, who were then to nominate to the president not more than seven persons, qualified by their expertise in natural resource development, public utilities, or industry, to serve without pay on an advisory commission. US Congress, Statutes at Large, December 1915-March 1917, Vol XXXIX, Part 1, Public Law 64-242, 64\(^{th}\) Cong., 1\(^{st}\) sess., “An Act: Making appropriations for the support of the Army for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and seventeen, and for other purposes,” 28 August 1916, 649-50. See also Kennedy’s description of the genesis of the council, Over Here, 113-15. The council and commission were not officially appointed until 11 October 1916, and they didn’t hold their first meeting until 6 December. Follow-on discussions addressed only general topics until after the severing of diplomatic relations with Germany on 3 February 1917. Kreidburg and Henry, Military Mobilization, 338.

\(^{13}\) Financial and production statistics indicate the rapidity and scale of the increase in capacity engendered by export of war material. From June 1915 to June 1917, the total value of US exports had more than doubled, to $15.2 billion (from $6.7 billion, June 1911-June 1913). By 1917, production capacity for rifle cartridges had increased to 2.25 million annually, from small amounts in 1914. From 1914 to 1917 private firms’ production of gun powder increased from 15 million to 360 million pounds per year. Production of artillery shells increased to 36.5 million per year by 1917. Annual capacity for machinegun production had increased to 70,000. Additionally, American factories were producing 15,000 to 20,000 rifles per day. These increases required a massive expansion of physical plant capacity and the training of a vast new work force. Koistinen, Mobilizing for Modern War, 114, 121, 126.
transportation and production capacity, financial reserves, and existing industrial production, let alone approximations of what would be required, were simply not available.\textsuperscript{14}

The Wilson administration assumed that the free market system combined with the patriotic feelings of producers would meet requirements more than adequately. But with significant opposition to the war in the South and agrarian West, government leaders realized that profits would have to provide incentive where patriotism was lacking.\textsuperscript{15} As the chairman of the War Industries Board, Bernard Baruch, noted, “Production in many industries had to be stimulated by every conceivable device; and the business man of America is so imbued with the habit of reaping where he sows, that even admitting for him the highest and most unselfish quality of patriotism, no device is more stimulating to his latent energy than a vision of fair reward.”\textsuperscript{16} The government’s intrusion into the economy of war mobilization was hesitant and haphazard, forming a grand experiment, with various boards, committees, and commissions coming and going in rapid succession.

Given the small size of the standing Army and the limited nature of war preparation, it is no surprise there were significant shortages of supplies of all types (weapons, ammunition, uniforms, etc.) upon mobilization. General Staff studies in February and March 1917 had anticipated these shortages, but since they were

\textsuperscript{14} Kennedy, \textit{Over Here}, 98.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 95.

completed so close in time to the declaration of war there had been no chance to correct them. As the draft proceeded, the pace of inductions was slowed at various times to ensure the men would at least have shelter and clothing. When the president and military leaders decided it was necessary to send at least one division to France as soon as possible as a morale-boosting measure for the Entente, the 1st Division sailed in June 1917 without steel helmets. (The British supplied the men with helmets upon their arrival.)\(^{17}\)

As the military and economic mobilization gathered momentum, the supply situation worsened rather than improving.

The overarching problem with the economic mobilization was the inadequacy of the top-level organizational structures (the Committee on National Defense/National Defense Advisory Commission and the War Industries Board (WIB)) in exercising control over production, as well as in controlling and prioritizing demand.\(^{18}\)

Consequently, the Army and Navy procurement programs proceeded without centralized supervision as they let indiscriminate contracts and sought to monopolize production outputs. The result was an almost complete collapse of the military economic and


\(^{18}\) Robert D. Cuff, *The War Industries Board: Business-Government Relations During World War I* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 268. As Cuff points out, the conflicts and need for coercion belie the post-war narrative of harmonious cooperation between patriotic businessmen and benevolent government. For a definitive history of the War Industries Board, see Cuff. For a particularly lucid account of the evolution of the WIB, including the political issues at play and a profile of Baruch, see Kennedy, 126-34. Other key agencies involved in economic mobilization included the US Shipping Board, Emergency Fleet Corporation, Shipping Control Committee, War Trade Board, US Fuel Administration, US Food Administration, US Railroad Administration, and War Finance Corporation. Most of these entities were established by Congress and had legal authority to act, but again, there was no central coordinating agency above them. The War Industries Board would have been the logical choice to serve this function, but it was too weak and carried no statutory authority.
logistics systems in the winter of 1917-1918.\textsuperscript{19} Writing after the war, Army Chief of Staff General Peyton March catalogued the lack of prioritization, inefficiencies, and misallocations, ultimately leading to such confusion that it was impossible to load transports in accordance with American Expeditionary Force requests and requirements and to account accurately for what had been shipped.\textsuperscript{20}

A second major problem was a critical shortage of shipping, even without the toll added by the German U-boats, which were sinking 800,000 tons of merchant shipping per month in 1917. The Shipping Board (empowered to form corporations for the purchase of merchant vessels), Navy Department, and War Department operated separate fleets with no unified control, until the winter crisis forced reform in this area as well. In February 1918, the three organizations agreed that a Shipping Control Committee, established under the purview of the Shipping Board, would serve as the liaison among them and with the British. This committee quickly evolved into a major control mechanism of economic mobilization. It established priorities for and quantities

\textsuperscript{19} The primary military contributor to this problem was the War Department’s antiquated, decentralized, uncontrolled procurement and supply system, which consistently undermined the efforts of the advisory commission to get a handle on economic mobilization. The department had five bureaus with separate staffs, budgeting, acquisition, and distribution processes at the beginning of the war, and then added three more. This structure led to hoarding and competition, with no rational determination of requirements and no service-wide prioritization. Koistinen, \textit{Mobilizing for Modern War}, 131-2, 183.

\textsuperscript{20} War Department, “Annual Report of Gen. Peyton C. March, Chief of Staff, United States Army, 1919,” \textit{Annual Reports 1919}, Vol. I (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 238, 245-7; Kreidburg and Henry, 310-11. Kennedy emphasizes the effect on historical interpretation of the ambiguity of the WIB’s position and power. Some analysts have considered it a wholly-owned subsidiary of big business, while others have interpreted it as an autocratic threat to fundamental American liberties. Kennedy views this ambiguity as arising from a “peculiarly intense disagreement about the principles of political economy that American society should embody” and the resulting “inability or unwillingness” of Woodrow Wilson and other members of his administration to use the formal authority that was granted to them. See \textit{Over Here}, 136-43, for discussion of this point in detail.
of raw materials to be imported, allocated trans-Atlantic shipping for supplies and troops as well as coastal shipping, and determined reserve shipping assets.\textsuperscript{21}

In addition to controlling production of war material, the government also understood the need to influence consumption of foodstuffs and allocation of critical raw materials. In May 1917, Wilson established the Food Administration by executive order, naming Herbert Hoover as administrator. Increased demand and a poor harvest in 1917 had caused food prices to skyrocket, but Hoover rejected the European model of rationing and other government controls on food, vowing instead to rely on voluntarism and patriotism. He therefore focused on public appeals and propaganda to reduce demand, proclaiming the virtues of “wheatless” and “meatless” days, and enlisted half a million people to go door to door urging housewives to sign conservation pledge cards. These efforts were successful in reducing demand. On the production side, however, patriotic appeals were not very useful. Farmers, especially in the vital grain production areas, were often opposed or at least unsympathetic to the war. Consequently, Hoover focused on increasing production by way of price incentives. He established guaranteed prices for US government purchases and even persuaded Entente purchasing commissions to increase the prices they paid.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} Kreidburg and Henry, \textit{Military Mobilization}, 324-6.

\textsuperscript{22} Kennedy, \textit{Over Here}, 117-20. The Lever Food and Fuel Act of August 1917 authorized the Food Administration legislatively. It also authorized the president to guarantee wheat prices and capitalized a government Grain Corporation at $150 million to back the guarantee. It further authorized the president to control fuel prices; Wilson subsequently named Harry Garfield as Fuel Administrator. See Kennedy, 123; also Koistinen, \textit{Mobilizing for Modern War}, 254-8. For details of the Food Administration, see William Clinton Mullendore, \textit{History of the United States Food Administration, 1917-1919} (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1941). Mullendore was a member of the Food Administration Staff. This is the published version of his official history completed in 1921. For analysis of Hoover’s campaign to mobilize American women, see Marsha Gordon, “Onward Kitchen Soldiers: Mobilizing the Domestic During World War I,” \textit{Canadian Review of American Studies} 29, no. 2 (1999): 61-87.
In contrast to the relatively successful food program, the government’s program to reallocate raw materials from civilian goods and convert factories to war production encountered significant difficulties. Initial efforts in October-November 1917 met with vociferous reaction as the War Industries Board announced its intent to curtail significantly nonessential production without prior consultation or even notification to industry. The board quickly backed down. As with its other processes, it lacked statutory authority to compel compliance and was, therefore, dependent on negotiation and voluntary cooperation. The automobile industry was a key target for conversion to war production with its skilled workers, high consumption of steel and other vital raw materials, and production of what was a luxury good. In this case, the producers stonewalled the government at every turn (some even hoarded raw materials). After much acrimonious negotiation, an agreement for curtailing production was finally reached in August 1918 – so near the end of the war that its provisions were rendered irrelevant. The acrimony and drawn out confrontation proved ironic in that most of the major producers had already converted roughly 75 percent of their capacity to war production anyway.23 Ultimately, the WIB achieved some influence over industrial conversion, but production successes were attributable more to private industry’s creation of new capacity and the profit motive than to any of its efforts.

Compared to the haphazard qualities of most elements of economic mobilization, the government achieved the most significant influence and control over the economy through its program to finance the war. Immediately upon the US declaration of war,

23 Koistinen, Mobilizing for Modern War, 237-41.
Secretary of the Treasury William McAdoo requested a $2 billion bond issue, at three and a half percent interest with a 30-year maturity. Four more bond issues followed, through the end of the war.\footnote{McAdoo set interest rates below market value, which appeared to save the government money, but resulted in strong inflationary pressures. From 1916 to 1920, the consumer price index almost doubled and there was a 75 percent increase in the money supply. The president and McAdoo viewed the inflation that resulted from selling government bonds at below-market rates as preferable to publicizing the true cost of the war. Kennedy, Over Here, 100-5.} Wilson and McAdoo also understood the need to raise taxes, and established a goal to pay for the war with an equal proportion of taxes and bonds. Income taxes were to be increased and, in particular, excess profits taxes were to be imposed. As might be expected, there was more significant opposition from the public, business leaders, and Congress to raising taxes than to issuing bonds. Congress did raise taxes, including the excess profits tax, but not to the rates initially proposed, and not nearly enough to achieve the 50-50 financing proportion with bonds.\footnote{Ibid., 106-13.}

The truly innovative step in these decisions was McAdoo’s insight that turning the bond issues into patriotic campaigns would energize the public’s financing of the war.\footnote{William G. McAdoo, Crowded Years: The Reminiscences of William G. McAdoo (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), 374, 378-9, 385.} Refusal to buy bonds was characterized as aiding the Germans, and all the new tools of advertising, mass entertainment, and mass communication were used to persuade and manipulate the public in an atmosphere of “super-heated patriotism.” As historian David Kennedy has observed, “McAdoo’s unwillingness to rely either on heavy taxation or on market-rate borrowing led directly to the effort to mobilize emotions instead, to substitute aroused patriotic fervor for the real economic price he would not ask the country to pay.” The decisions of President Wilson and Secretary

\footnote{McAdoo set interest rates below market value, which appeared to save the government money, but resulted in strong inflationary pressures. From 1916 to 1920, the consumer price index almost doubled and there was a 75 percent increase in the money supply. The president and McAdoo viewed the inflation that resulted from selling government bonds at below-market rates as preferable to publicizing the true cost of the war. Kennedy, Over Here, 100-5.}

\footnote{Ibid., 106-13.}

McAdoo set a precedent in successfully obscuring the true costs of the war, at least in the short term, by minimizing direct taxation and production shifts from consumer goods in favor of financing the war through loans.27

By the war’s end, the US economic mobilization had created a more or less effective but still improvised and somewhat fragile system. American participation in the war was too brief to allow any of its economic mobilization processes to reach maturity. On the positive side of the ledger, from 1914 to 1917, major industries for the production of small arms and explosives had been developed, almost from scratch. These industries were able to continue to fulfill Entente orders while expanding production to meet US military requirements from 1917 onward. On the negative side, the US “failed miserably” in production of artillery and aircraft. The production and supply problems of the winter were solved at least to the point of ameliorating that crisis, but there was still no truly effective control over the entire national economic mobilization. The War Department, Navy Department, Emergency Fleet Corporation, and other agencies still set requirements independently, and the War Industries Board focused its efforts on meeting those requirements rather than prioritizing among them. With the exception of the Navy, no organizations were capable of recording reliable data on either actual or projected requirements, making it impossible to plan. There were still major turf battles and personality conflicts between the War Industries Board and the military leadership, especially the Army. Taken collectively, these remaining problems did not bode well for the increases in US forces and combat operations that had been

27 Kennedy, *Over Here*, 105-6.
planned for 1919, which might have led to a crisis even greater than that of winter 1917-18.\textsuperscript{28} Summing up the situation in his final report, General March declared the United States was “thoroughly unprepared” when it declared war, with military, industrial, and transportation systems ill-suited for the task – primarily because of a failure to understand clearly the linkage of military to industrial mobilization and a profoundly inapt organizational structure.\textsuperscript{29}

\textit{Creating Public Support}

Public mobilization for World War I took place within a context of significant divisions in American society at the beginning of the twentieth century – immigrants vs. natives, business vs. labor, and conservatives vs. Progressive reformers.\textsuperscript{30} These divisions were reflected in contradictory visions of the US role on the international stage. Large segments of the population, particularly in the rural, agrarian South and West, remained isolationist in outlook and saw no need for the country to be embroiled in affairs beyond its borders. Others, emboldened by the victory over Spain in 1898 and President Theodore Roosevelt’s muscular foreign policy, envisioned a broader role for the United States that was both inevitable and potentially beneficial. Many of these individuals were socially and politically influential and, recognizing the potential dangers of greater international involvement, had pushed an agenda of preparedness before the war. These societal divisions were mirrored in the various branches of government, especially the Congress, and by 1914, the Wilson administration found

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\textsuperscript{28} This summary is from Koistinen, \textit{Mobilizing for Modern War}, 251-3, 265-6.

\textsuperscript{29} War Department, \textit{Annual Reports, 1919}, 238, 245-7.

\textsuperscript{30} Brewer, \textit{Why America Fights}, 49.
\end{flushright}
itself walking a tightrope among competing views. In public, the president tried to mollify both the preparedness advocates and those who wanted to avoid US involvement in the war raging in Europe. He supported the idea of strengthening US defenses but campaigned in 1916 on the slogan, “he kept us out of war.”

Faced with this divided society, once the United States entered the war Wilson and his advisers set about creating an explicit campaign to generate and sustain support for the conflict. Kennedy observes that “more than the other belligerent governments, the Wilson administration was compelled to cultivate – even to manufacture – public opinion favorable to the war effort.” Despite the German submarine campaign, there was no immediate sense of peril or crisis to seize the public’s imagination. Wilson had to rally the public by deliberately mobilizing emotions and ideas. As a result, in the United States the “Great War was peculiarly an affair of the mind.”

As one of his first acts as a wartime president, Wilson established by executive order the Committee on Public Information (CPI) to manage the mobilization of the American public. After the president named George Creel as committee chair, the day-to-day activities of the organization quickly devolved to him. The committee’s propaganda faithfully echoed both President Wilson’s perspective and his message.

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32 Kennedy, *Over Here*, 46.

33 Woodrow Wilson, “Executive Orders, 13 April 1917,” *Messages and Papers*, Vol. XVII, 8247. The order named the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy as committee members, with authorization for each to detail one or more officers to the committee and provision for a separate civilian executive director.

34 Stephen Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information* (Chapel Hill NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), xi-xiii, 17; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 59-60. For a good summary of Creel’s background and personality, as well as background
In converting his ideas to words and images, the CPI relied on two main themes. First was the importance of American values as a binding force within the nation and as a unique contribution to the world. This theme was particularly important in integrating recent immigrants, overcoming disparate political views, and building national unity. The second was a reliance on atrocity propaganda and exaggeration of the German threat – a depiction of Germany as a menace to the very existence of the United States with a goal of world dominance.

The CPI converted these themes into a basic message, presented simply and without nuance: men should willingly register and report for military service when called; Americans on the home front should support the war by conserving essential materials, buying bonds, and paying taxes; and the United States was fighting to preserve civilization, defend and extend democracy, and make the world “safe.” Coupled to these prescriptive aspects of the message was the warning that those who would publicly question, let alone overtly oppose, the draft or US involvement in the war were either willingly or unwittingly agents of the German enemy. Creel stressed the CPI’s commitment to “absolute openness and honesty” in presenting the


35 Wilson’s key ideas and the manner they were used by the CPI are discussed in detail in Vaughn, Inner Lines, Chapter 3, 42-60, Chapter 4, 61-82, and Chapter 5, 83-97.

36 Brewer, Why America Fights, 55-6, 62.
government’s information. He further emphasized the organization’s commitment to truth and described its mission as “educational and informative only.”

The success of the draft, especially, rested on the government’s ability to ensure the population voluntarily complied with the draft law, and from the beginning, draft registration was presented within the larger context of the patriotic duty of the nation, writ large. The administration achieved compliance through a combination of direct repression of opponents, coercion in various forms, and, most importantly, the creation of a patriotic mindset leading not just to compliance but willingness, and even eagerness, to support the war. Individuals were required to report en masse to their regular election polling locations to register all on the same day. The first of these registration days, 5 June 1917, became the occasion for a “national pep rally” with a concerted effort by the government, through the Committee on Public Information and local Councils of National Defense, to foster enthusiasm. The nation’s press was largely a willing participant in this agenda. Communities held gala celebrations and cheered the men who came forward to register. Chambers terms it “one of the first successful exercises in mass compliance through propaganda, hoopla, and peer pressure.”

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38 Kreidberg and Henry, Military Mobilization, 261-2; Chambers, Raise an Army, 184; Kennedy, Over Here, 150-1, 154-5. Kennedy (167) notes that in creating such an atmosphere the administration contradicted one of the major arguments it had used in proposing the draft – that reliance on volunteers would require the whipping up of dangerous emotions whereas the use of conscription would allow for a more desirable national mood of calm resolve. The reliance on arousing public fervor was continued for subsequent draft calls, but by the final call in September 1918, the technique was beginning to wear thin. The War Department held its breath with each draft call, and only the rapid end of the war assuaged the ever-deepening concern regarding compliance with the draft.
In promoting draft compliance as well as other aspects of its basic message, the CPI made use of every communications technology and mechanism available, while continually tailoring precisely focused messages for narrowly defined sub-sets of the population. This ever-burgeoning specialization led to a plethora of divisions and bureaus. As they took this course, they quickly drifted from the original goal of simply disseminating factual information; despite remaining, at least on the surface, committed to “truth,” the gap between intent and actions widened dramatically.\(^{39}\)

As one of his first initiatives, Creel established a Division of News to serve as the sole source for consolidation, preparation, and release of war news – encompassing information from the White House; War, Navy, Justice, and Labor Departments; and wartime government agencies such as the War Industries Board. The news division began providing mimeographed handouts to the press, and its virtual monopoly on war news allowed ample opportunity for “spin,” withholding, or otherwise controlling the flow of information. The division worked 24 hours a day churning out information for release to the public, and while there was some disgruntlement regarding being reduced to “messenger boys,” the press generally acquiesced to this arrangement.\(^{40}\)

The CPI’s efforts were not limited to the print medium. One of its most effective communications avenues was the Four-Minute Men Program, which involved volunteers who would deliver short speeches on various war topics. Originally, these speeches

\(^{39}\) Kennedy, *Over Here*, 61-2.

were delivered during intermission at theaters, but as the efficacy of the program became apparent, it was expanded to churches, men’s and women’s clubs, labor union meetings, farmers’ grange meetings, and so on.  

Committee organizers also recognized the importance of films as a propaganda medium. They established a Division of Films, which produced three full-length movies and numerous documentaries and involved itself in commercial filmmaking by granting permits for films, suggesting scenarios, and influencing distribution. The commercial film industry willingly accepted and used in their films the government’s themes of US virtue opposing German dishonor and barbarism. As Brewer has noted, movie audiences were the “CPI’s ideal American citizen[s], receiving stirring instruction from the government, the military, and Mary Pickford.”

Given the extent of the CPI’s information conduits, its ability to promulgate the government’s message to the far reaches of the country, and its influence over theoretically independent sources of information (such as the press, labor unions, and immigrant organizations), the resulting near-monopoly on information dissemination  

41 Creel, Complete Report, 2; Kreidberg and Henry, Military Mobilization, 362-4; Brewer, Why America Fights, 63-4. Over the course of the war, some 75,000 four-minute men presented over 755,000 speeches in 5,200 communities.

42 Larry Wayne Ward, The Motion Picture Goes to War: The U.S. Government Film Effort during World War I (Ann Arbor MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), 12, 109; Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, “The United States’ Film Industry in World War One,” in The First World War and Popular Culture: 1914 to the Present, ed. Michael Paris (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 138. The rapid rise of the motion picture industry coincided with the war. Numbers of theaters and the size of audiences vary greatly among sources. Ward writes there were about 12,000 theaters in the country and quotes a letter to President Wilson claiming that 12 million people went to motion picture theaters every day. DeBauch quotes a 1917 advertisement that asserted there were 16,000 theaters. These disparities arise not only from lack of an accurate census, but also because stand-alone motion picture theaters were just being built, and movies were also shown in multi-use theaters as well as other types of meeting halls.

43 Creel, Complete Report, 4; Kreidberg and Henry, Military Mobilization, 364-5; Brewer, Why America Fights, 64-9.
allowed it to achieve a remarkable consistency in the content of its message. Although Creel emphasized the positive aspects of the information program, that consistency was also a product of the CPI’s oversight of a “voluntary” program of press censorship and enforcement of rules for censoring press cables. The CPI guidelines, understandably, prohibited publication of sensitive military information, such as troop movements, but they also more ambiguously prohibited publication of anything “seriously embarrassing” to the United States or which might provide assistance to the enemy.\textsuperscript{44} Ultimately, the Wilson administration promulgated three executive orders and three laws bearing on censorship and information control in an ever-broadening web of prohibitions.\textsuperscript{45} The strict censorship of news reports and soldiers’ communications from overseas ensured the US public was shielded from the actual nature of the war.\textsuperscript{46}

Those segments of society in favor of the war and convinced of the need to “do one’s patriotic duty” greatly assisted the government’s efforts to mobilize the public.

The picture drawn by President Wilson and reinforced repeatedly by the CPI of the

\textsuperscript{44} Creel, \textit{Complete Report}, 3; Kreidberg and Henry, \textit{Military Mobilization}, 349. Ambiguity in such guidelines is inevitable and illustrates the fine line a democratic government and free media must walk in any war. Equally inevitable is the slippery slope whereby withholding information becomes deception of the public and the effort to expose problems and inform the public becomes an aid to the enemy.

\textsuperscript{45} They were: the 13 April 1917 Executive Order 2594 establishing the CPI; the 28 April 1917 Executive Order 2604 authorizing the Navy and War Departments to censor cable and telegraph communications; the Espionage Act of 15 June 1917, which defined espionage and other illegal activities, including attempting to obstruct military recruiting or enlistments, incite mutiny or AWOL, or incite disloyalty, whether civilian or military; the Trading-\textit{With-the-Enemy} Act of 6 October 1917, which included prohibition against communications outside regular, censored channels; the 12 October 1917 Executive Order 2727-A, Sec. 14-16 establishing the Censorship Board and mandating censorship of all foreign mail; and finally, the Sedition Act of 16 May 1918, enacted as an amendment to the Espionage Act, which defined sedition so broadly as to permit suppression of almost any critical speech or writing. See Kreidberg and Henry, \textit{Military Mobilization}, 355-7.

\textsuperscript{46} For example, no photos of dead US soldiers, soldiers out of uniform, or soldiers without the proper equipment were permitted, but pictures of enemy dead on the battlefield were allowed. Brewer, \textit{Why America Fights}, 71-3.
nation rising up together was powerfully effective in buttressing these impulses. By tapping into the tradition of local voluntary organizations, the federal government both took advantage of and helped strengthen an atmosphere of “coercive voluntarism” that was especially effective in smaller communities and the homogenous enclaves in large cities where neighbors tended to know each other’s business. For example, these existing social mechanisms were used to “encourage” compliance with the draft – amounting essentially to a “bottom-up” enforcement of the selective service provisions. Newspapers published the results of registration drives by name (which did have the effect of protecting exempted men from public harassment). Churches honored men by name upon their registration and induction, and most towns held public ceremonies, some quite elaborate, on the days their cadres departed for training camp. The view of draft evaders as “slackers” who were “unmanly” and had failed the obligations of citizenship was widespread across society. Taken in sum, these attitudes and actions created tremendous social pressure to comply with the draft.47 Similar pressures were brought to bear, with similar effect, in other arenas of public mobilization. Those who refused to buy war bonds were vilified and often publically humiliated. Women were “encouraged” to comply with the rationing campaigns, and those who failed to do so were subject to local gossip and their names turned in to authorities.

The tradition of local organizations establishing and enforcing social norms also manifested itself in more direct forms of coercion. A primary example of this phenomenon was the American Protective League, a secret organization founded in

47 These details and the notion of coercive voluntarism are from Christopher Joseph Capazzola, Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 30-3, 39-41.
Chicago that quickly spread to major cities across the country. Its goal was to aid the Justice Department in fighting disloyalty. While its members had no police powers, they did take part in illegal searches and detentions, intimidation, and strike breaking.

Eventually, they focused their efforts on finding draft dodgers – most spectacularly by staging multi-day “slacker hunts” simultaneously in major cities.\(^\text{48}\) In total, the more or less spontaneous, “bottom up,” mobilization of significant segments of American society played an important role in the overall mobilization of the public. The CPI’s efforts would have been much less successful if the majority of the existing grass-roots organizations at the foundation of society had been predisposed against the war.

This grass-roots support did not, however, preclude all opposition. In fact, there were significant and varied forms of resistance to the war itself and the draft – all of which eventually proved ineffectual, not least because of the government’s harsh reaction. Shortly after the passage of the Selective Service Act, opponents challenged the draft through the court system, and the Supreme Court heard the arguments from consolidated appeals of convictions involving failure to register and encouraging men not to register. It issued two unanimous judgments in January 1918 upholding the convictions in both classes of cases, basing its decision on Congress’s power to raise and support an army.\(^\text{49}\) In addition to opposition on the legal front, there were some limited

\(^{48}\) Ultimately, the extra-legal and undiscriminating nature of the American Protective League’s actions, as well as those of similar organizations, led to a backlash. This negative reaction delegitimized such organizations and actions, and in so doing, strengthened the power of the central government, which assumed responsibility for their purposes. Ibid., 41-53 and Kennedy, \textit{Over Here}, 165-6.

\(^{49}\) “Selective Draft Law Cases” (Arver v. United States and others), 245 U.S. 366 (1917), 367, 368, http://0-www.heinonline.org.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/HOL/Page?handle=hein.usreports/usrep245&id=1&size=2&collection=usreports&index=usreports/usrep (accessed 20 July 2010). The court challenges rested primarily on the grounds that the Constitution did not grant the power of conscription to the federal government and that the draft was a violation of the thirteenth amendment prohibiting
instances of overt draft resistance, mostly in the form of public demonstrations. These initiatives were quickly and thoroughly crushed, with between 15 and 20 people killed over the course of the war in these confrontations. Overall, opponents of the draft and the war, ranging from isolationists, industrial workers, and agrarians to members of the women’s suffrage movement, immigrants, and pacifists to radical socialists and anarchists, were significant in terms of raw numbers, but with little in common otherwise, lacked cohesiveness and were unable to agree on coordinated action. Additionally, the more radical antiwar activists suffered both overt government repression and ostensibly unsanctioned attacks by private citizens.

While the government took harsh reprisal against opponents and often ignored other abuses, the effort to mobilize the public was far more dependent on the efforts of the CPI to arouse positive sentiment than on repression of dissent. Moreover, the work of the CPI, as well as that of other government agencies, to ensure compliance with government policies and widespread support for the war was successful. The CPI’s achievements resulted from a confluence of new techniques, such as advertising, and technologies, such as motion pictures, with a population that was still small enough to be reachable through a relatively limited number of communications conduits – primarily print, public speaking, and movies. The limited number of conduits made it possible for

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50 Capozzola, *Uncle Sam*, 30.


52 Kreidberg and Henry, *Military Mobilization*, 372; Brewer, *Why America Fights*, 75, notes that by the end, most of the US public considered the United States as having won the war for the Allies.
the government to exert a high degree of control of both medium and message. At the same time, the population was still relatively idealistic about and willing to accept both the government’s message and its actions, had not yet learned to be cynical about or critical of the modern “science” of advertising, and was accustomed to and, to a degree, willing to be guided by civic “opinion leaders.”

Conclusion

Since US participation was so brief compared to the other combatants, and even briefer in terms of how long it took to generate and train combat forces for an effective contribution at the front, most of its mobilization processes were still haphazard, inefficient, and incomplete. The end of the fighting masked incipient problems in all these processes that would have come to light had the war continued. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize the profound transformation accomplished by the US government, military, and industry, both from 1914 to 1918 and in the months of active US participation in the war. In contrast to nations like Germany and France, which had established and trained mass conscript armies over the course of a century, the United States created, trained, and equipped such a force from scratch in a matter of months and transported it across an ocean to the European battlefields where it fought credibly. Such an achievement should not be lightly dismissed, from both the perspective of its impact on the outcome of the war and its impact on the future of US mobilization for war.

The war’s mobilization processes, however problematic, laid the foundation, both conceptually and practically, for national mobilization for the next major war. That foundation comprised the following elements.
• An emphasis on idealistic goals and the altruism of the nation’s motives. The United States stood apart from and above other nations as the protector of universal human values.

• The validation of the government’s power to compel military service, with the selective service system as a tool to manage manpower for both military and industrial needs.

• The conversion of civilian industries to military production.

• Obfuscation of the true monetary costs of the war, mostly in response to a lack of public support.

• An emphasis on social pressure (i.e., coercive voluntarism) to ensure compliance with rationing and conservation programs, tax payments and bond sales, and the draft.

• The lack of a direct threat requiring the government to “manufacture” public support, making war an “affair of the mind” for the American people.

This foundation was vital to the mobilization for the next major war, with the lessons learned from this experience ensuring that for the first time government and military leaders would not have to reinvent mobilization processes and concepts. While some of these elements have fallen by the wayside, several, for good or ill, have survived to the present day.
CHAPTER 3
WORLD WAR II AND MOBILIZATION FOR “TOTAL” WAR

Between the world wars, there was a concerted effort to learn the lessons of World War I in planning and preparing for future mobilizations, especially by military leaders. When the next great war came, there were many similarities in the mobilization processes, but also areas that proved to be significantly different. These differences arose from a number of factors. First, the economic potential and capacity of the country were much greater than at the beginning of World War I, despite the Great Depression, and government, business, and labor leaders were more familiar with and accustomed to concepts of centralized planning. Second, the size and sophistication of government agencies had greatly increased. Third, the military services had spent the interwar years studying and planning for mobilization and, thus, were much better prepared. Finally, technological changes in warfare, which were just beginning during World War I, had reached a level of maturity and ubiquity that required more direct involvement of industrialists, as well as scientists and engineers, in mobilization.¹

Threats and Objectives

The objectives and motivations of the United States in going to war in 1941 were, perhaps, as clear and straightforward as at any time in the nation’s history. President Franklin Roosevelt had perceived the danger posed by Japanese expansionism and the rise of Hitler to power in Germany throughout the mid-to-late 1930s. With the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, he had been leading the country toward a recognition

that war was likely to come to the United States as well. As the Germans achieved victory after victory, Roosevelt both cajoled and sidestepped Congress in providing more, and more overt, aid to Britain. A growing portion of the population agreed with his assessment and the need to prepare for conflict. Preparations culminated with the September 1940 passage of the first peacetime draft law in the nation’s history.

The basic wartime goals of the United States were set forth, in concert with the British, before the country entered the conflict. Pre-war military staff discussions culminated in a conference between Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Roosevelt aboard warships off the coast of Newfoundland in August 1941. The outcome of these talks was agreement that the fight against Nazis Germany would take priority and a statement of common principles, referred to as the Atlantic Charter. This document characterized the “Hitlerite Government of Germany” and its allies as a “danger to world civilization.” The principles it enumerated ranged from the highly idealistic, for example the creation of a peace that would allow the people of all nations to “live out their lives in freedom from fear and want,” to the more basic and specific, such as maintenance of freedom of the seas.

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2 For example, in February 1939, 69 percent of the public said the US should do everything possible to help England and France if war came; in October 1939, 58 percent favored repeal of the arms embargo if it would help England and France but not Germany, while 91 percent were opposed to lifting the embargo if it would help Germany but not England and France. Hadley Cantril, ed., *Public Opinion 1935-1946* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), 967.

3 While isolationist sentiment had not ended (a series of neutrality acts passed after 1935 was designed to limit assistance to belligerents in foreign wars, for example), FDR traded 50 old destroyers for basing rights on British territory in Canada and the Caribbean, allowed the British to purchase a large proportion of the increased US production of arms and equipment, and in March 1941 gained Congressional passage of the Lend-Lease Act. Millet and Maslowski, *Common Defense*, 414, 415, 418.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor led FDR to enumerate more explicit war objectives. The following day in his address to Congress asking for a declaration of war, Roosevelt asserted, “Our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger” and emphasized that the “American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.”

In a fireside chat broadcast the ninth of December, Roosevelt explained in more detail the nature of the threat and what he was calling on the nation to do. He labeled the Japanese attacks across the Pacific “criminal,” the “climax of a decade of international immorality,” and asserted that “powerful and resourceful gangsters have banded together to make war upon the whole human race.” He also explicitly connected the actions of the Japanese to those of Hitler and Mussolini. He warned of a long, difficult war in which “every single man, woman, and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history” and called for wide-ranging efforts to increase production, declaring that a seven-day work week in all war industries was now government policy. He asserted his faith that the people of the country would cheerfully do whatever was necessary to achieve “final and complete” victory while warning that they could never again rely on isolation from world affairs to protect them from the “sources of international brutality.”

Roosevelt remained committed to these goals throughout the war, and his speeches and addresses to Congress and the nation reflected his determination to achieve victory.

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5 Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Address to the Congress Asking That a State of War Be Declared Between the United States and Japan,” 8 December 1941, Public Papers, 1941, 515. Thirty-three minutes after the president’s speech ended Congress had voted the war resolution; 82-0 in the Senate, 388-1 in the House.

6 Franklin D. Roosevelt, “We Are Going to Win the War and We Are Going to Win the Peace That Follows” – Fireside Chat to the Nation Following the Declaration of War with Japan, 9 December 1941,
consistent with these overarching objectives throughout the war, with one important
detail added at the Casablanca conference with Churchill in January 1943. As part of a
statement to the press at the end of the conference, he explained the world would gain
peace only through the “total elimination of German and Japanese power” and the
“unconditional surrender [of] Germany, Italy, and Japan.”

The Military Context

In setting these goals, Roosevelt was committing the country to a truly global
effort. American forces fought on the ground from Africa and Italy through Western
Europe, across the Pacific, and in Alaska, China, and Southeast Asia. US naval forces
conducted convoy escort and anti-submarine operations in the Atlantic and submarine
commerce raiding, fleet actions, and carrier air warfare in the Pacific, plus amphibious
assault operations in both theaters. The Army Air Force supported ground and naval
operations in all theaters, conducted strategic bombing campaigns against Germany and
Japan, and flew airlift and airdrop missions. Historian Dennis Showalter argues that the
breadth of US effort during the war was unmatched by any other combatant nation. In

Public Papers, 1941, 522-31. In responding to the declarations of war by Germany and Italy two days
later, Roosevelt declared “the forces moving to enslave the entire world now are moving toward this
hemisphere.” Both houses of Congress unanimously adopted joint resolutions declaring war against both
countries. See “Message to the Congress Asking That a State of War Be Recognized Between Germany
and Italy and the United States,” 11 December 1941, Public Papers, 1941, 532-3.

7 Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The Eight Hundred and Seventy-fifth Press Conference. Joint Conference
by the President and Prime Minister Churchill at Casablanca, 24 January 1943,” The Public Papers and
presidents/ppafdr0012&id=1&size=2&collection=presidents&index=presidents/ppafdr (accessed 11
November 2010). The compiler cites evidence that Roosevelt’s emphasis on unconditional surrender,
while not a matter of prior consultation with Churchill, was a pre-planned statement and not an off-the-
cuff comment as is sometimes asserted. He also notes that in a later press conference, FDR justified the
demand by asserting that after World War I, most Germans denied that they had surrendered. He was
determined that, in this war, neither the Germans nor the Japanese would have any doubt. See 47, 48.
addition to the actual fighting forces, the United States created a logistical infrastructure to support and transport them around the world, provided Lend Lease and other aid in vast quantities to the British, Russians, and Chinese, and produced a massive merchant fleet to carry that aid to far-flung ports. Showalter observes that “other combatants did some, or many, of these same things. No one did all of them.” Even with this level of effort, however, for the United States, the war was global, but was not total, since the “direct survival of the country, its institutions, and its people” was not at stake.8

The nature of the fighting and the global commitments of the United States made it necessary again to raise a mass army—of much greater size and for a longer period than in World War I. Not only was the Army larger than during the Great War, the Navy and, especially, the air arm were greatly expanded. Throughout the interwar period, military planners drew on the lessons of World War I as they considered the process of raising a mass military force for the next war. By the late 1930s, Roosevelt and his military leaders agreed on the need for military expansion in response to international threats and began discussion of how to achieve it. However, FDR and Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall were also convinced that conscription was not possible unless the nation was actually at war. Nevertheless, after winning nomination for his third term, Roosevelt publicly advocated a draft in some form, emphasizing the need for hemispheric defense rather than intervention abroad. As with the preparedness movement prior to World War I, certain segments of eastern elite society took the lead in pushing for military readiness through conscription. They

lobbied Congress until Representative James W. Wadsworth (R-NY) and Senator Edward R. Burke (D-NE) agreed to sponsor the legislation.⁹

Congress debated the conscription bill over the summer, and it passed both houses by an almost two to one margin on 14 September 1940. The specifics of the law were, for the most part, identical to the World War I law. It authorized the president to establish a Selective Service System, administered by local draft boards. It set a maximum number of 900,000 men to be drafted in peacetime. All men ages 21 to 36, including resident aliens, were required to register. In a bow to isolationists, the service of draftees was limited to US possessions and the Western hemisphere. Additionally, the law provided for a $10,000 fine or five years imprisonment or both for anyone who failed to register when required, failed to report for military duty when called, or counseled or aided in draft evasion.¹⁰

Again, with the lessons of the Great War in mind, the government transformed the draft processes into civic occasions. On 16 October 1940, mass registration took place for all eligible men at their local precinct polling stations. Over 16 million reported as required. The lottery drawing to establish who would be drafted in what order occurred on 20 October, with immense fanfare. The draft numbers were placed in capsules and collected in the bowl that had been used for the World War I ceremony. Secretary of War Henry Stimson stirred the capsules with a ladle made of wood from a


rafter of Independence Hall and, blindfolded with cloth from a chair used at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, drew the first number. Overall, as historian George Flynn put it, the scene “reeked with American heritage” and “resembled a liturgical ritual of national faith.” The publicity campaigns and ceremonial trappings were, ultimately, successful in this early move toward national mobilization. In a December 1940 poll, 92 percent of the population agreed the draft was fair; 89 percent agreed the draft was a good idea (after only 35 percent had agreed a year earlier); and even 76 percent of draft-age men agreed it was a good idea.¹¹

*Industry and the Economy*

The nature of the fighting and the necessity of raising a vast military force of course again put a premium on mobilizing the nation’s economy. Unlike the First World War, however, mobilization actions, planning, and preparation began before the United States entered the war.¹² Interwar considerations of mobilization, especially among military planners, focused on a process beginning with a specific (declared) mobilization day and proceeding in a predictable, orderly fashion. The planners had no inkling of programs like “destroyers for bases,” “cash and carry” allotments of munitions and


¹² Rearmament actually began in the Navy in the mid-1930s, reacting to the perceived Japanese threat. There were also small steps to improve the Army’s readiness beginning in late 1938. These initiatives segued into more direct mobilization actions with the beginning of war in Europe in September 1939. See Kreidberg and Henry, *Military Mobilization*, 541-3, 554-6.
equipment to soon to be allies, or Lend Lease, all of which undermined that planned orderliness before it was even started. Throughout 1940-41, the government took concrete steps to prepare the nation for war. In addition to passing the peacetime conscription bill and beginning the rapid expansion of the armed forces, it began to create the administrative structure (and the “alphabet soup” of agencies) that would manage the economic mobilization of the country. These agencies were created to address specific problems or provide overarching guidance to the nascent mobilization program. All were, to varying degrees, ineffectual, primarily because of lack of centralized decision-making and implementation authority.

One of the key lessons taken from World War I was the need to manage the allocation of manpower between the armed forces and essential home front production. Even with this recognition, the demands for manpower and the inefficiencies of manpower management combined to create significant difficulties. As with other aspects of economic mobilization, there were multiple agencies with overlapping policy- and decision-making authority. The War Manpower Commission (WMC), created by presidential order on 18 April 1942, was to be the central manpower manager.

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14 Those established before the attack on Pearl Harbor included the War Resources Board (August 1939), the Office of Emergency Management (May 1940), the National Defense Advisory Commission (reestablished in May 1940 based on the National Defense Act of 1916), the Office of Production Management (January 1941), and the Supply Priorities and Allocations Board (August 1941). See the chronology of mobilization planning between the wars in Alan L. Gropman, *Mobilizing US Industry in World War II: Myth and Reality* (Washington DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 1996), 39. For a useful chart that summarizes the evolution of wartime mobilization agencies from initial advisory programs to mature wartime organizations, see Kreidberg and Henry, *Military Mobilization*, 688.
However, the Selective Service System was entirely independent of the commission, and with 6,500 draft boards, each of which retained a high degree of independence, the deferment policies established by the WMC were often ignored. Management of the hugely increased federal workforce, agricultural workers, and eventually, merchant mariners and railroad workers was also separated from the commission. By mid-1943, there was a manpower crisis. Shipbuilding and aircraft manufacturing were behind schedule, voluntary enlistments in the armed forces were undermining personnel management programs, and the military was continually increasing its estimates of the military manpower that would be required to win the war. It was well into 1944 before the situation was brought under some modicum of control, and the military ultimately made do with a far smaller proportion of the population in the military services than any other major belligerent – relying on a total force of 12 million (10 million of whom were draftees) and an Army of only 90 divisions. (By February 1945, the last tactical unit was shipped overseas and there was no strategic reserve available to US war leaders.) This crisis and the relatively restricted size of the armed forces were self-inflicted wounds – the result of inefficient utilization rather than a true shortage of manpower.

Comparatively speaking, the government used a light hand in managing the nation’s population.

There was a higher percentage of manpower allocated to industrial production than any other major belligerent, which is understandable given that President Roosevelt had committed the nation to becoming the “arsenal of democracy.” In fulfilling this

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role, and despite the outcry over and congressional investigations of excessive profits garnered by industrialists and financiers during World War I, the profit motive was still accepted as the primary incentive for wartime production. The perceptions of profiteering did lead, however, to close attention and various attempts to curb corporate profits. Overall, industry made “healthy” profits during the war, with aggregate averages from about eight to twelve percent.16

Before the United States entered the war, the government began to encourage expansion of industrial capacity. Corporate leaders were reluctant to build new plants or convert to military production, in some cases even after the United States joined the fight, remembering the problems of excess capacity and recession following World War I. Government planners’ assumptions that private financing would suffice were incorrect. From 1940 to 1945 industrial inventory expanded by about two-thirds, with approximately two-thirds of the cost of that expansion financed by the government, through either direct investment or loans. Congress, initially skeptical of production incentives of any kind, passed a new excess profits tax law, and then allowed more leniency in other areas. They permitted accelerated depreciation of military production facilities and plant equipment and approved programs for cooperation between procurement agencies (principally the War and Navy Departments) and private firms in converting plants to military production.17

16 The shipbuilding and aircraft industries managed after-tax returns of close to 30 percent for most firms (the only ones close to WW I levels). See Koistinen, Arsenal of WW II, 433-9 for a detailed discussion of industrial profits.

17 Initially, these cooperative programs were administered through Emergency Plant Facilities contracts and were not at all successful. The subsequent establishment of the Defense Plant Corporation
In addition to incentivizing industrial production, the government applied controls to consumption of critical raw materials and food. As with other economic mobilization processes, these efforts went through an extended period of trial and error. Even before the United States entered the war, Roosevelt created the Supply Priorities and Allocation Board (SPAB), which was ultimately unsuccessful in reaching its goal of centralizing production priorities for both civilian and military goods. Still, it made some inroads toward converting the civilian economy to wartime production.\footnote{Gropman, \textit{Mobilizing US Industry}, 43, 44-6; see also Kreidberg and Henry, \textit{Military Mobilization}, 685-6.}

In response to the SPAB’s ineffectiveness, President Roosevelt established the War Production Board by executive order on 16 January 1942, with Donald Nelson as its chairman. The goal, again, was to centralize direction of procurement and production, establish priorities, and allocate materials and facilities. The new organization did make progress in converting civilian industry to production of war material, most importantly the automobile industry, a huge consumer of labor and raw materials. The last civilian vehicle of the war was completed on 10 February 1942.\footnote{Of total war output, the automobile manufacturers produced over 50 percent of aircraft engines, 33 percent of machine guns, 80 percent of tanks and tank parts, 50 percent of diesel engines, 100 percent of trucks, about 20 percent of aircraft, and about 39 percent of aircraft parts and subassemblies. Gropman, \textit{Mobilizing US Industry}, 59-60; Koistinen, \textit{Arsenal of WW II}, 133-5.}

Overall, though, this agency also proved to be mostly ineffectual, primarily because Nelson did not have enough power and authority and did not use effectively that which he had, and because Roosevelt did not back him as much as he could have. Additionally, there were too many other agencies with conflicting roles and authorities, and looming over all were the
powerful military procurement agencies, especially the War Department, who considered it their right to undercut or ignore the decisions of the WPB.  

The weaknesses of these existing agencies and mechanisms came to a head in early 1943 with Congressional hearings and investigations, as well as press reports and criticism. Roosevelt finally established the Office of War Mobilization (OWM) by executive order on 27 May 1943, with James Byrnes as director. Of more importance than the creation of another new agency, Byrnes had the power of being virtually an “assistant president” for domestic affairs, fully supported by Roosevelt – and unlike Nelson, did not hesitate to use the authority granted him. The OWM was intended to provide overarching direction and unity for all federal agencies involved in mobilization, with authority for decision-making in the event of disputes among them and to issue “directives and policies” to achieve its charter. In contrast to other civilian leaders, Byrnes stood up to the military procurement agencies and was able to set up review boards to ensure against excessive military procurement and to establish a degree of information exchange regarding the relationship between the grand strategy of the war and procurement decisions. 

In addition to controlling allocation of essential materials among wartime producers, the government began a comprehensive program of rationing in January 1942, which slowly expanded over the following months. For the general population, some commodities, tires for example, were controlled by means of specific

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20 Gropman, Mobilizing US Industry, 56-7, 69-73; Kreidberg and Henry, Military Mobilization, 686-7. For details on increasing and managing the production of key commodities (aluminum, steel, copper, and rubber) see Koistinen, Arsenal of WW II, 136-58; also Gropman, 115-20.

authorizations. Gasoline and other fuels were allocated by means of stamps and coupons, while food rationing was refined to a system of points (developed by the Office of Price Administration) that gave purchasers at least some flexibility.  

The government focused its food rationing campaigns on women, in keeping with existing gender norms of women as supervisors of food buying and preparation. Given that the population did not readily accept food rationing, public officials reframed the issue as a matter of women’s patriotism, while deflecting arguments about interference in the free market. The active cooperation of the news media and advertisers was a key to this effort, and by March 1943, over 80 percent of the public approved of rationing.  

A well-known aspect of the food rationing program was the planting of so-called “victory gardens.” The government described the gardens as another patriotic duty, and as with other aspects of the rationing program, tied them particularly to women’s duties to be productive and provide for their families’ needs.  

It is important to remember that while there was rationing and restriction of civilian consumption, these measures, as Gropman points out, amounted more to inconvenience than hardship for most of the civilian population. Unemployment

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23 Yang, “Creating the Kitchen Patriot,” 56, 64, 70-1. See 60-4 on the role of the press and advertising industry in fostering the turn-around in public opinion. Yang makes the important point that while “Rosie the Riveter” garnered all the publicity (both then and since), the contribution of the “Kitchen Patriots” was just as significant.

essentially disappeared, and wages increased. Unlike other belligerents, the average
daily calorie consumption increased, production of civilian goods increased, and after
Pearl Harbor, the general population was not at risk from enemy action. While the
population was supportive of the war, when polled about reducing spending (relative to
the drive to curb inflation), the vast majority said they would only do so when a “certain
level of living had been achieved” – and the description of that level was well beyond
just basic necessities. Only 14 percent said they intended to reduce personal spending,
while 65 percent said they expected little or no reduction in standard of living, and those
in the top income brackets said they intended to maintain their standard of living.

Given these attitudes, the government had to consider carefully its process of
paying for the war, and in the end, the overall government program to finance the war
while maintaining the stability of the economy achieved much better results than in
World War I. Benefitting from the earlier experience, as well as that garnered from the
New Deal programs designed to combat the depression, the Roosevelt government had
improved administrative structures and tools available, as well as a clearer vision of
what was necessary. As a result, World War II wholesale prices increased 38 percent

26 James T. Sparrow, “‘Buying Our Boys Back’: The Mass Foundations of Fiscal Citizenship in
to label the US economic and industrial mobilization as “miraculous.” Both Gropman and Koistinen point
out that such superlatives are unwarranted. While US production certainly provided significant material
advantages for the Allies, other belligerents were more fully mobilized (while under attack), and US
output was about what should have been expected. See Gropman, Mobilizing US Industry, 134 and 129-
37 for comparative statistics; also Paul A.C. Koistinen, “Warfare and Power Relations in America:
Mobilizing the World War II Economy,” in The Home Front and War in the Twentieth Century: The
History, 1984), 101-3. Koistinen is generally quite critical of Roosevelt, his subordinates, and the various
mobilization agencies in this essay. For a sharply contrary view, see Professor Robert D. Cuff’s
“Commentary,” 111-18, in the same volume.
and the cost of living 27 percent, compared to 81 and 83 percent respectively during the First World War. Additionally, taxes provided approximately 47 percent of government revenues in World War II, compared to 36 percent at most in the previous conflict.27

There were, however, significant disagreements within the executive branch and Congress regarding war financing decisions and methods. In addition to the 47 percent of financing garnered from taxation, 27 percent of war costs came from borrowing and 26 percent from new money. Taxes levied included corporate income and excess profits taxes, plus personal income taxes – revenues from which increased dramatically, exceeding those from corporate income taxes for the first time.28 The level of government borrowing increased even more dramatically, to a level unprecedented in the nation’s history. The gross debt on 30 June 1946 stood at $270 billion, up from $43 billion on 30 June 1940. Of the borrowed amount, eight bond drives of three to six weeks each from November 1942 through December 1945 accounted for $157 billion.29

As with World War I, the bond drives had a veneer of voluntarism, with a healthy dose of both overt and implied coercion beneath. Five million “Minute Men” volunteers delivered high-pressure sales pitches all over the country. Payroll savings plans, especially in the war industries, were also strongly “encouraged.” As a result, over the

27 Koistinen, Arsenal of WW II, 432.

28 In 1940 approximately seven percent of the American public paid income taxes; by 1944, more than 64 percent did. Ibid., 429-31. The tax rates rose as quickly as the numbers of those being taxed, reaching 11 percent on average by 1945. Although automatic withholding began in 1943, only about half of revenues were collected by this means. The Treasury Department had nowhere near the manpower to audit and enforce compliance; therefore, the government was dependent on voluntary obedience to the tax levies. Sparrow, “Buying Our Boys Back,” 266-7.

29 Koistinen, Arsenal of WW II, 431-2.
course of the war, average bond purchases amounted to about $314 for every citizen – close to the average personal income tax payment per year.\textsuperscript{30}

As can be seen from these statistics, it was essential that the public accept the legitimacy of the income tax and war bonds. While the most wealthy individuals, banks, and corporations provided the greatest portion of financing for the war, it is still noteworthy that average Americans contributed a significant fraction. The government had to have this mass participation, and as a result, the public had a great deal of fiscal leverage. There was a noticeable reduction in bond purchases and increased complaints to Congress about taxes when inflation in the early years threatened economic well-being and when the war was not going well or strategic decisions were unclear. The administration followed two paths in getting the public, literally, to “buy” the war. The first was creating a “sense of guilt, duty, and identification with the [average] soldier.” The second was building a sense of self-interest for each individual. The first was necessary, although not sufficient; “but when patriotism fused with a sense of entitlement to an American standard of living, the obligations of fiscal citizenship proved quite durable.”\textsuperscript{31}

\textit{Creating Public Support}

The military and economic aspects of mobilization were inextricably intertwined with the mobilization of the American public. President Roosevelt was, however, ambivalent, at best, to the idea of creating popular support by way of a propaganda campaign a la World War I. Nevertheless, he accepted the recommendations of his


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 264, 266.
advisers that he should establish a government agency charged with conveying information to the public. On 13 June 1942 he issued an executive order establishing the Office of War Information (OWI), with CBS reporter Elmer Davis as its director.\(^\text{32}\)

From its inception, the OWI was buffeted by contradictory impulses. Davis’s stated goal was a “strategy of truth” and reliance on the common sense of the population to arrive at the desired conclusions, but his mission was to ensure support for the war, so truths had to be persuasive. With the need for persuasion, modern advertising methods came to predominate, and as a result, consumption and personal benefits were emphasized over hard work and sacrifice. Additionally, Davis and his organization never had the backing and authority that Creel and the Committee on Public Information enjoyed during World War I. There were too many independent agencies, sources, and pipelines for information to centralize control effectively, so the OWI was the coordinator more than an originator of information.\(^\text{33}\)


\(^{33}\) Brewer, *Why America Fights*, 98-9. For details on Davis’s difficulties in coordinating information both within government and through the civilian media, as well as the internal battle that led to the predominance of “advertising men” see Blum, *V for Victory*, 31-9. Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*, 38-72, also provides a clear analysis of the evolution of the OWI and the associated bureaucratic struggles; see especially 63-72 for the controversies and Congressional opposition that led to significant budget cuts for domestic activities in 1944 and the resultant reduction of those activities to little more than liaison between civilian media and government agencies.
There were three primary foci to the message disseminated through the OWI. The first of these was the depiction of the enemy and the threat posed to the United States. Here, too, there were contradictory impulses at work. The OWI made a concerted effort not to engender the degree of hatred created by World War I propaganda, yet stereotypes of the enemy, especially the Japanese, were pervasive, particularly in popular culture.\textsuperscript{34} Although there never developed the same hatred for the Germans as for the Japanese, the American public still came to see both enemies as less than fully human and often regarded the Japanese as altogether deserving of extermination.\textsuperscript{35}

The second focus of the government’s message involved explaining the benefits of fighting and defeating the threat in terms of the security and prosperity the people would gain. A consistent area of public anxiety was the post-war economic situation. Everyone vividly remembered the effects of the Great Depression, and most remembered the recession following World War I. As a result, a large majority was convinced life after the war would be difficult. The government, consequently, worked to reassure the population and convince them that hard work during the war would lead to tangible rewards after. Factories producing tanks and planes and rifles would turn to making vacuum cleaners and cars and toasters; investment in the war would lead to prosperity. Advertisers and industrialists were only too happy to encourage this mode of

\textsuperscript{34} Brewer, \textit{Why America Fights}, 104-7.

thinking, seemingly defining Roosevelt’s “Freedom from Want” as the “freedom to buy consumer goods.”

The third area of focus for the government’s message was the selling of post-war internationalism, which received more emphasis after the tide of the war had turned clearly in the Allies’ favor. This aspect was presented in very general terms, but even so, it too, suffered from contradictory impulses – especially with respect to the ideals set forth in the Atlantic Charter. To garner public support, the administration downplayed the more egalitarian aspects of the charter in favor of emphasizing how the United States would take the lead in the post-war world to ensure its own security and prosperity. Thus, aid provided to war-ravaged countries was not only altruistic, but also good for business, and an international role would ensure access to raw materials and markets.

Even with the scope of the US effort and the determination to engage the support of the public, the government found through “market research” and polling that most Americans were psychologically detached from the war. This fact caused great concern, especially early on when there occurred a significant and rapid decline in public support after the initial uproar caused by Pearl Harbor. The administration was especially concerned about the need for public support to finance the war. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr. therefore decided that, rather than using war sentiment to sell bonds, the government needed to use the sale of bonds to create support for the war. The Treasury Department devoted a massive effort to sell the bonds and to

37 Ibid., 128-37.
38 Blum, V for Victory, 16-21.
encourage payment of income taxes. One of the most effective techniques was Kate Smith’s radio marathons, which mixed entertainment with pleas for participation and personal stories designed to tug the heartstrings of listeners. Additionally, publicity about the importance of bond purchases was also embedded in or the sole focus of a plethora of other avenues – from parades to radio serials to film shorts in theaters; from every form of voluntary organization the department could persuade to help to direct solicitations door-to-door; from the Treasury Hour weekly radio broadcast to Donald Duck’s adventures in tax payment to innumerable pro bono items in popular magazines. Market research revealed the most effective appeals focused on hatred of the enemy, especially the Japanese, and the personal benefits of winning the war.39

In disseminating its message, the government had much better tools to assess public opinion than in World War I. The Bureau of Intelligence within the OWI used opinion polls and “correspondence panels” – the latter made up of opinion leaders such as clergy, newspaper editors, and businessmen who could both accurately report the public mood in their communities and influence it. The president often fashioned or adjusted his public messages based on polling results.40

Roosevelt was masterful in using radio, and as illustrated by the success of Kate Smith’s bond selling marathons, radio was the most pervasive and effective communications channel. Each day, over 90 percent of the public listened to radio for

39 Ibid., 16-21. Morgenthau was advised by Peter Odegard, a political science professor from Amherst College, who was hired as a counselor on “mass psychology.” Sparrow, “Buying Our Boys Back,” 268-9; see 269-277, for more details on the message content and effectiveness of the government’s fiscal propaganda.

40 Brewer, Why America Fights, 103.
three to four hours, mostly for entertainment. Thirty million people tuned in to the most popular shows (out of a total population of about 130 million), and most of FDR’s fireside chats drew about half the population. Radio was ideal for propaganda not only because of the extent of its reach, but also because the regularity of scheduling permitted planning and distribution of propaganda messages in a targeted manner.  

Radio propaganda was controlled almost entirely through cooperation between the OWI and the War Advertising Council, which national advertisers had formed to provide a link between the government and ad agencies. Together they created the Network Allocation Plan. The Radio Division of the OWI specified the desired propaganda themes four weeks in advance; the allocation plan specified how often to include the messages (for example, every fourth show); and the advertising companies deciding how best to “package” the messages. Consequently, radio propaganda was highly effective, with radio programming a “quasi-official” appendage of the government. The blending of advertisers, sponsors, celebrities, and the government led to the blending of sales campaigns, patriotism, entertainment, and propaganda.  

In addition to radio, movies and newsreels also reached broad segments of the population. The average weekly attendance at movies during the war was 85 million, plus the free screenings provided to millions of soldiers. Elmer Davis, early in his tenure as director of the OWI asserted that the easiest, most effective medium of propaganda

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was entertainment, so people were not directly aware of the propaganda message. Movies were tailor-made for this approach.\textsuperscript{43} As with the radio industry, the movie industry was cooperative with the OWI, which had established a Bureau of Motion Pictures as part of its domestic branch. This bureau served as the central liaison with the industry. It issued a *Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry*, reviewed scenes and dialogue for objectionable material, reviewed scripts, and suggested ideas and important points to include in films.\textsuperscript{44} Among other content, the information manual suggested characterizations of the enemy, and whether in direct response to the government’s suggestions or as a matter of moviemakers’ own proclivities, these characteristics were widely used in film depictions of both the Japanese and the Germans.\textsuperscript{45} The cooperation of film makers in disseminating the government message can be seen in the treatment of Pearl Harbor as a dastardly sneak attack in feature films from 1942-45. The repetition of this theme helped create a mental shorthand with the phrase “remember Pearl Harbor” that was not only evocative at the time but remains so to the present day.\textsuperscript{46} Films also played a role in garnering public acceptance for aspects

\textsuperscript{43} Christie and Clark, “Framing Two Enemies,” 55-6; Blum, *V for Victory*, 24-5.

\textsuperscript{44} Christie and Clark, “Framing Two Enemies,” 55-6; Brewer, *Why America Fights*, 102.

\textsuperscript{45} These characteristics included, among others, “having no legitimate government” and being cruel, cynical, and deceitful. Christie and Clark conducted a content analysis of a small number of films to ascertain the influence of the US government on depictions of the enemy. Extrapolating from this sample, they concluded that influence was extensive. See “Framing Two Enemies,” 55, 62, 65-7, 69.

of the war that went beyond previous norms, such as strategic bombing of enemy
civilian populations.\textsuperscript{47}

In addition to radio and film, the government made use of other communications
mechanisms, the most significant of which was the news media. Before the war, those
charged with conveying government information had emphasized that one of the keys to
adhering to democratic norms was “credible independent journalism.” Yet by 1943,
after crackdowns on critical reporting instigated by unhappy sponsors and the tightening
of government censorship programs, journalists tended to view their work as part of the
war effort, serving the American people by fighting the war with their reporting. “The
journalistic function of American propaganda and the propagandistic function of
American journalism [had become] inseparable.”\textsuperscript{48}

The government also made use of quasi-official channels such as the Writers’
War Board, a voluntarily initiated endeavor of a small group of authors who used their
contacts to gather nearly 5,000 writers to the cause of supporting the Roosevelt
administration’s war aims. The group was, on the surface, independent, but eventually
the government provided covert funding for items like administrative costs. The board
worked closely (but behind the scenes) with government agencies, in particular the
Treasury and War Departments, to disseminate specific messages as requested (for
example, discouraging black market gasoline sales or encouraging volunteers for
bombardier duty in the Army Air Force). Around 85 percent of the work was of this

\textsuperscript{47} Daniel Marcus, “William Wyler’s World War II Films and the Bombing of Civilian Populations,”

nature, but eventually the board exercised widespread influence in injecting the
government position on all kinds of war topics into all kinds of public information
sources, from books to radio scripts to comics to films.49

In addition to the programs to disseminate its message, the government engaged
in an overall program of censorship. The administration established the Office of
Censorship (separate from the OWI) on 16 December 1941. Byron Price, who had been
executive news editor for the Associated Press, directed this agency and had authority
over all civilian communication. Price and his staff set up a system of voluntary
compliance after issuing guidelines specifying eight categories of news not to be
published. They also enlisted a group of about fifty well-known, respected editors and
publishers from around the country, dubbed the “censorship missionaries,” to act as
liaisons with censorship headquarters and to promote voluntary compliance with the
censorship guidelines. One of the key motives for both Price and the missionaries was
protecting the press by keeping the censorship process from being too heavy-handed and
out of the hands of government bureaucrats. The program was successful because it was
run by fellow reporters, who took a low-key approach, using friendly phone calls and
letters to encourage compliance or correction of errors. The foundation of its success,
however, was that after Pearl Harbor, there was widespread agreement on the need for

49 The writer’s board campaign to reduce the loss of gasoline to black market sales included a
Saturday Evening Post article that sarcastically explained a black market customer’s rationale, heroes of
comic books and radio serials battling black market racketeers, and cartoons and editorials. The effort to
induce volunteers for bombardier duty (and other non-pilot positions in the AAF) ranged from another
Saturday Evening Post article—titled “Bombardier,” to photographic features in Look, to articles in
romance magazines, to popular songs (e.g., “I Wanna Marry a Bombardier”). Within six months the AAF
asked the board to scale back the campaign because they now had too many volunteers for bombardier and
some form of censorship, and the members of the media wanted to do their part to win the war.⁵⁰

Despite the government’s effectiveness in using available communication channels, the OWI was never able to exercise the pervasive control over its message that Wilson and Creel and the Committee on Public Information achieved during World War I. Roosevelt was never a great supporter of the organization. Neither were FDR’s congressional opponents, who viewed it as a partisan agency designed to bolster his political agenda. As a “coordinator,” Davis was consistently overridden by more powerful government agencies, particularly the State, Navy, and War departments, not to mention Roosevelt’s penchant for serving as the primary source of government pronouncements. Despite an overarching consensus on the goal of winning the war, there were too many people with differing ideas on how to accomplish that goal and what to say about the progress toward it. Given the scope of available communications mechanisms, all these factors added up to a span of control too large for any one agency. Finally, despite the widespread support for the war and the cooperation with the censorship program throughout the civilian media, they were much less inclined to accept government pronouncements without question than they had been in the first war. Additionally, their primary focus remained commercial success rather than

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⁵⁰ The censorship categories included, for example, troop and ship movements and locations, plane dispositions and strengths, sensitive war production information, etc. Michael S. Sweeney, “Censorship Missionaries of World War II,” *Journalism History* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 4-5, 7-9, 11-12; Brewer, *Why America Fights*, 100-1.
dissemination of government messages. For these reasons, as Blum says, the “OWI accomplished about as much as its director should have expected.”

The OWI had at least one advantage over its World War I predecessors – that being the public impulse for war that resulted from the Pearl Harbor attack. Prior to December 1941, given the widespread disillusionment with US participation in World War I and the resulting isolationist mindset, there was little sentiment for war. As the situation deteriorated in Europe, and especially after the war started, there were continuous arguments between isolationists and internationalists, but this contentiousness occurred between two segments of national elites. After the conflict began, broader segments of the public began to view Hitler and the Nazis as a serious threat to the United States, and they focused their concerns on advocating aid to the Allies, especially Britain. Literary figures such as Archibald MacLeish and Robert Sherwood were among the most vocal as they joined with others in the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. The average American seemed to agree with both sides of the argument; “they did not want to go to war and they did not want Hitler to win.”

Ultimately, Roosevelt and other government leaders were ahead of the public in recognizing the need for mobilization. The administration thus created a plethora of

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51 Blum, _V for Victory_, 44-5; Winkler, _Politics of Propaganda_, 20.

52 Winkler, _Politics of Propaganda_, 17. See 9-17 for the evolution of MacLeish’s and Sherwood’s views and their efforts to enlighten the public. Brewer, _Why America Fights_, 93. See 89-95 for a good summary of the isolationist vs. internationalist dialogue. Polling data throughout 1941 consistently indicated that over 80 percent of the public would vote against going to war with Germany and Italy; at the same time, a majority said it was more important to defeat Germany than to stay out of the war. Cantril, _Public Opinion_, 971, 975. See Cantril, 966-78, for polls showing the evolution of opinion on US entry in the war, prior to Pearl Harbor.
information agencies to influence public opinion, using the internationalist groups, the news media, and Hollywood in a continuous effort to break down the isolationist mindset. This widespread and varied campaign ensured that by the time of Pearl Harbor, the “public was resigned about going to war even if it didn’t want to.” In an April 1941 poll, for example, 82 percent of the public said they thought the US would enter the war in Europe at some point, and in polls in January, June, and September of 1941, a majority said they felt like the US was already in the war.

Given the public’s resignation regarding the need for war and the nearly universal reaction to Pearl Harbor, there ended up being no significant organized opposition to the conflict. Although there were isolated cases – for example six “fascist-type” newspapers had their second class mailing privileges revoked or suspended for printing seditious material – there were no campaigns (either sanctioned or unsanctioned) against “ slackers,” organized labor, pacifists, and so on as had occurred during World War I. The government’s approach to potential opponents was more subtle, with the most consequential instance being Roosevelt’s use of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, led by J. Edgar Hoover, to gather information about isolationists prior to US entry in the war. The bureau investigated prominent anti-interventionists, in particular, Charles Lindbergh and the America First Committee, on suspicion of illegal activities, sometimes using illegal wiretaps. These suspicions were nothing more than

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53 Brewer, Why America Fights, 98.
54 Cantril, Public Opinion, 968, 975.
unfounded rumors; they found nothing illegal, and the America First Committee was disbanded after Pearl Harbor.\footnote{Douglas M. Charles, “Informing FDR: FBI Political Surveillance and the Isolationist-Interventionist Foreign Policy Debate, 1939-1945,” \textit{Diplomatic History} 24, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 211-32. Charles claims that the political intelligence collected by the FBI was passed to Roosevelt by Hoover and that such information was significant to FDR’s ability to counter the anti-intervention argument. Although he does not present any direct evidence of how FDR used it or its effects, it is reasonable to conclude such information was of use.} The government disestablished the Office of War Information in September 1945, and despite its weaknesses, overall, the campaign to mobilize public sentiment in support of the war was, perhaps, the least contentious in the nation’s history. However, the success of the public mobilization campaign came at a price. As Brewer points out, people once again had been “distanced from the real [war] by censorship and simplistic messages.” She claims further that “in the end, the uplifting and misleading propaganda version of World War II survived and the ‘strategy of truth’ did not.” There were too many contradictory impulses at work – central of which was that the administration could never truly bring itself to rely on or trust the public’s discernment. Any inclination to do so foundered on the view that international affairs were too hard to explain and too complex for the ordinary citizen’s judgment. The resultant distancing and oversimplification did not so much impede public mobilization during the war as set a precedent for subsequent administrations. It established or at least reinforced a mindset among those in government that it was best to give the public superficial generalities while trusting experts in government to take care of the details.\footnote{Brewer, \textit{Why America Fights}, 138, 139, 140.} Future administrations would maintain the preference for uplifting and misleading stories, a course that would prove less effective in later wars with less clear-cut enemies and goals.
Conclusion

During both world wars, mass military forces supported by mass production techniques militated against short wars. These conflicts were the product of a reinforcing, escalating impulse that began in the 1800s. As this escalatory impulse proceeded, restraints protecting neutrals and noncombatants gave way to unrestricted warfare, ever-more heinous weapons and efficiency in killing were justified as necessary to achieving total victory, enemies were demonized as the often sub-human “other,” and the entire social and economic structure of opponents became a legitimate target.\textsuperscript{58} As the culmination of this escalatory cycle, the world wars of the twentieth century are often labeled “wars of materiel” or “machine warfare.” As such, they also mark a culmination in the processes of mobilizing for industrial warfare. Historian Michael Geyer describes machine warfare as having “forced the loose nexus between military organization and operations on the one hand and industrial and popular mobilization on the other into a tight and functional linkage. Machine warfare was only possible with the systematic organization of economic resources and national manpower reserves.”\textsuperscript{59} Because of this tight linkage, there was a reinforcing relationship between strategic goals and the degree of mobilization – the greater the degree of societal mobilization, the greater the impetus and capacity for pursuing broad, all-encompassing goals. Conversely, the broader the goals, the greater the degree of societal mobilization required.

\textsuperscript{58} Michael Howard, “Total War: Some Concluding Reflections,” in Chickering, Förster, and Greiner, 377-80.

\textsuperscript{59} Geyer, “German Strategy,” 544.
Both world wars, but especially World War II, followed this pattern and, in doing so, established precedents and a mindset about the nature of mobilization. These precedents included the tone and content of the government’s justification for entering these wars, which centered on a dramatized depiction of a clash between good and evil, the unity of the Allies, and the United States as separate from, resucer of, and superior to Europe, as well as the source and defender of democratic values for the entire world. This focus led to over-simplification, obfuscation, and appeals to emotion in creating public support for the conflicts. A second major precedent was the migration of power from individuals and voluntary associations to the national government and the legitimation of government intrusion into private businesses and the personal lives of individuals to an unprecedented degree. Finally, a third major precedent was the reliance on free market profit incentives for military production while at the same time establishing a generally cooperative relationship between the military services and industry, which thereby sowed the seeds for what was later labeled the military-industrial complex.

Government and military leaders in the late 1940s assumed that the next war would be similar to the two world wars – requiring the mobilization of a mass army and all the resources of the nation. The reality, of course, is that World War II was the last such industrialized, mass conflict, and future mobilizations would take on a very different character. In particular, the tight linkage between strategic goals and the degree of mobilization that had been required for industrialized warfare was no longer necessary. Even so, as subsequent US wars were more ambiguous in terms of both objectives and manner of fighting, World War II became the exemplar of the way wars
should be fought and the nation should be mobilized. This focus has had a deleterious
effect on the ability of government policy makers and analysts to consider clearly the
nature of mobilizing for war in the post-Cold War, post-industrial period.
CHAPTER 4
THE COLD WAR AND PERPETUAL MOBILIZATION

The United States ended World War II as the most powerful nation on earth – undamaged, with a huge economy poised to respond to a decade and a half of pent up consumer demand. Yet, contrary to current day mythology of the post-war period as the Ozzie and Harriet fifties, almost as soon as the victory parades ended, the country was gripped by a sense of unease and even fear. Memories of the post-World War I recession and the Great Depression were vivid.\(^1\) While people understood the United States would have to play a much greater role on the international stage than in the past, they also understood as never before that the world was a dangerous place. This sense of unease coalesced around the perceived threat of worldwide communism and the potential expansion of Soviet power, in particular.

As the nominally cooperative wartime relationship between the United States and Soviet Union devolved into confrontation, that confrontation was labeled “cold war.” Its roots lay in the incompatibility of the communist and capitalist economic systems and the resulting mutual suspicions engendered by decisions taken to achieve individual national interests.\(^2\) President Harry Truman and his advisers concluded that the Soviets

\(^1\) This sense of unease had both cultural and economic aspects. Peace seemed ephemeral given the destruction of the war and the newly revealed power of nuclear weapons. The process of reverting to civilian production raised the specter of reverting to pre-war economic conditions. People craved economic advancement and consumer goods, but underneath these desires was a concern that social norms would continue to be undermined, as they had been during the war. On these issues, see Dennis Merrill, “The Truman Doctrine: Containing Communism and Modernity,” \textit{Presidential Studies Quarterly} 36, no. 1 (March 2006): 29 and Bernd Greiner, “The Spirit of St. Louis: Mobilizing American Politics and Society, 1937-1945,” in Chickering, Förster, and Greiner, 256-7.

\(^2\) See John Lewis Gaddis, \textit{The Cold War} (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 26-46. For a particularly cogent, comprehensive summary of the thinking of US policymakers see Melvyn P. Leffler, \textit{A
posed a significant threat and that the United States would have to be the bulwark standing in support of democratic values and opposition to communist expansion. In the short term, they designed a series of aid and alliance programs to ensure that the industries and resources of Western Europe, Japan, and the Middle East did not fall under Soviet control. All of these programs were unique in US history.³

Policy planners and presidential advisers were faced with “mobilizing” the country for this new type of war, as well as being as prepared as possible if the war were to become “hot.” Both civilian and military leaders were also determined never again to suffer a surprise such as Pearl Harbor. This conviction, coupled with a perception of a greatly increased threat, ensured that the government, military, and public all put a premium on military preparedness. Soviet intentions and capabilities were interpreted from a worst-case perspective, resulting in the need for constant vigilance, lest they perceive and take advantage of US weakness. The consequent militarization in the name of preparedness took many forms, from a greatly expanded bureaucracy focused on national defense to a large peacetime military to, in general, a “high degree of public mobilization for war-related activities,” for example, civil defense.⁴ Despite these changes in perspective, mobilization for the Cold War remained more a matter of thought than reality until the North Korean attack on the south in June 1950, which served as a necessary catalyst for the process. The essential elements of Cold War


³ Christensen, Useful Adversaries, 242.

mobilization took shape during the Korean War. Subsequent administrations modified US foreign policy and military force structure, but the overarching strategy remained remarkably consistent through 1989, and none of those subsequent changes was as radical as the initial moves by Truman.⁵

**Threat and Objectives**

In leading the nation into mobilizing for the Cold War, the administration of President Harry S. Truman created the foundation for understanding the communist threat and its severity. As early as 1946 George F. Kennan, at the time a relatively low-level State Department official posted in Moscow, set the tone for characterizing Soviet intentions and the general nature of communism. In his now famous “long telegram,” he explained the Soviet view of the world as divided between a center of capitalism and a center of socialism, leading to inevitable and irreconcilable conflict. He warned that as a result, the United States should expect the Soviets to take every opportunity to extend their power, both in the immediate periphery of the Soviet Union and around the globe.⁶

Other advisers agreed with Kennan’s assessment, and Truman, himself, was inclined to view the Soviets as a threat. The president subsequently asked the National Security Council staff to make recommendations regarding US strategy and the means of justifying increased spending in response to the general increase in Soviet power. While

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the resulting National Security Council Report #68 (NSC-68) initially was classified, it was expected the ideas contained therein would be publicized.\textsuperscript{7}

One of the best-known documents of the period, NSC-68 served as the foundational explanation of the perceived threat, the basics of US strategy to meet that threat, and the level of effort that would be required. The writers described the Soviets as engaged in “cold war,” with tactics designed for subversion of societal institutions such as labor unions, civic enterprises, schools, churches, and media – the material and moral foundations of society. The authors also recommended the general shape of a strategy to protect against these risks. “A more rapid build-up of political, economic, and military strength and thereby of confidence in the free world than is now contemplated is the only course which is consistent with progress toward achieving our fundamental purpose.” They explained that the United States’ ultimate goal was the creation of a functioning economic and political system across the free world from which to launch a “vigorous political offensive.” The document also emphasized the need to create an adequate military shield behind which this transformation could take place, with enough military power to deter Soviet expansion, if possible, and defeat Soviet or Soviet-directed aggression, whether limited or total, if necessary.\textsuperscript{8} Given this mindset, US national security came to be focused on military power, which had to be the greatest in world for the nation to be truly safe. As a result, significant advances in Soviet military capabilities had the potential to engender uncertainty and insecurity in

\textsuperscript{7} Christensen, \textit{Useful Adversaries}, 122-6.

the United States out of proportion to the actual threat that existed and to override relevant analyses and questions that should have been asked by strategic decision makers.\(^9\)

In contrast to previous conflicts, the Cold War definition of the enemy was focused primarily on communism as an ideology, rather than on the Soviet Union or China as a nation. Indeed, the Russian and Chinese people were depicted as dupes or victims of their governments, who, if given a choice, would certainly opt to discard their totalitarian overseers and create democratic governments. This focus on the “enemy as idea” led to several important consequences in the overall framing of the danger. First, the threat, removed from its national and cultural circumstances, was perceived as monolithic. Communism was treated as a homogeneous, global phenomenon, controlled from Moscow, that posed the same level of threat regardless of its context. Second, the communist world and the “free world” were considered fundamentally incompatible. The threat was not only to the United States, but to all the free peoples of the world. Third, communist ideology was conceived as a contagion to which people were susceptible. Consequently, the “disease” had to be contained and continuous vigilance was required to prevent its spread. One rotten apple or falling domino would lead, inevitably, to many more. Finally, because this ideology could spread so easily, it was in the interests of the United States to counter it wherever it might arise, and if the confrontation escalated to open conflict, better to fight abroad than on its home soil.

\(^{9}\) Sociologist Sheldon Ungar applies the concept of moral panic, based on the “great fear” of nuclear weapons, to this phenomenon. See “Moral Panics, the Military-Industrial Complex, and the Arms Race,” *Sociological Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 166-71.
The depiction of the threat as open-ended and unbounded by geography or time led to the inescapable conclusion that the US effort to counter it had to be equally open-ended and unbounded. That commitment to containment erupted into open warfare in Korea and Vietnam. American officials assumed the North Korean invasion of the South was the opening salvo in a worldwide Soviet campaign of conquest.\textsuperscript{10} American presidents from Eisenhower to Nixon committed the nation to sustaining the independence of South Vietnam based on similar reasoning. President Lyndon Johnson, in explaining the commitment of US combat troops in 1965 articulated the US rationale. He charged that communist China was the force behind North Vietnam and labeled the United States a necessary shield – all Asia was at risk, and dominance by communism would be a direct threat to the United States. Withdrawal or defeat in Vietnam would only mean battle somewhere else, and then somewhere else, and so on.\textsuperscript{11}

Such sustained vigilance inevitably led to profound changes in the national security posture of the United States. Among these changes were much larger outlays for defense and foreign aid; a large standing military, with a significant portion armed with nuclear weapons at hair-trigger readiness and another significant portion committed to forward bases around the world; and, at least initially, a concerted effort to prepare the public to endure, fight, win, and recover from a nuclear war. In this manner, the Cold War was framed as a total national effort analogous to or even greater than that required to defeat the nation’s World War II enemies.

\textsuperscript{10} On this point see Ojserkis, \textit{Beginnings of Arms Race}, 1.

The Military Context

The strategic context of the Cold War ensured that military mobilization for this confrontation would evolve to something considerably different than mobilization for the mass warfare of the first half of the twentieth century. That strategic context included the swift incorporation of large numbers of nuclear weapons into the arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union. At the same time, rapid changes in military technology and increased killing power, not only of nuclear but also of conventional weapons, led to an arms race that put a premium on close ties between the military and the defense industry. Additionally, the occurrence of “limited” wars within the Cold War context called for specialized, professionalized military forces rather than the conscript forces that had been the norm since the French revolution. As the containment strategy was put into practice, the need to meet Soviet power with US power required US forces to maintain a global posture and military capabilities for a wide variety of operations.¹² This military posture, despite variance in practice from one administration to the next, remained consistent throughout the Cold War.

Containment required the United States to take an active military role around the world. The Korean War served as a catalyst for this policy. Before the war started, the Truman administration viewed the confrontation with the Soviets primarily as an economic competition. The United States focused on building the international free market economy to counter communism through mechanisms such as the Marshall Plan.

¹² Many scholars have pointed out that the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States extended far beyond the military realm, with both nations convinced of the need to be “first” in everything, to show the rest of the world which system was best and worthy of alliance. For example, Karsten Werth analyzes the technological competition of the space race in “A Surrogate for War - the U.S. Space Program in the 1960s,” Amerikastudien 49, no. 4 (September 2004): 563-87.
After June 1950, that focus shifted to international military rearmament, and the assumption that it would have to be willing to commit military forces anywhere on the globe gained much greater weight.¹³

Dwight Eisenhower came to the presidency convinced that this emphasis on military power posed a significant threat to the nation—especially the potential for development of a “garrison state” mentality. Shortly after the Korean armistice, his National Security Council staff issued a report on national security policy (NSC-162/2) that described his administration’s commitment to a balance between military and economic power. At the same time, NSC-162/2 warned against threats to domestic freedoms created by fear mongering and encroachments on civil liberties.¹⁴

Subsequent administrations, while varying the levels of emphasis among different aspects of US strategy, continued to focus on worldwide confrontation with the Soviets and the Chinese, as well as communist movements everywhere. President John F. Kennedy and his Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara recognized the weaknesses of massive retaliation and opted for increased conventional forces—a “two and a half wars” capability—and “flexible response.” President Lyndon Johnson maintained the worldwide obligations of the United State even as the forces intended to fulfill those commitments were hollowed out by the ever-increasing commitments to the Vietnam War. President Richard Nixon assured the nation’s friends and allies the United States would meet its treaty obligations, but would expect supported nations to contribute more


¹⁴ National Security Council, “Report #162/2 on National Security Policy (NSC-162/2), 30 October 1953,” in Langston, 129, 130. This document was the foundation of the “New Look” for the US military and the nuclear strategy of massive retaliation.
of their own resources.\(^\text{15}\) The basic posture of the United States with respect to the scope of its anti-communist obligations and actions continued in this vein until the fall of the Berlin wall and the breakup of the Soviet Union.

While the conventional military operations conducted in various global hot spots and limited wars throughout the Cold War were important, the operations that made the Cold War “cold” were of at least equal significance. From the success of the Berlin airlift of 1948-49 through the perceived advantages of supplying arms to friends and allies, it was clear to American policy makers that what we would today call “non-lethal” operations could sometimes be as effective as direct combat at holding the Soviets at bay. As such, the United States put great emphasis on deterrence by means of worldwide readiness and training (for example, the periodic practice deployments of sizable air and ground units from the United States to Europe) and the assembling of formal and informal allies.

However, the aspect of deterrence that defined the Cold War was nuclear deterrence.\(^\text{16}\) The ambiguity associated with assessing the opposing side’s capabilities and intentions ensured that deterrence was never a static condition. Accumulation of weapon stockpiles, development of new delivery systems, and the focus on continuous


\(^{16}\) Some scholars regard nuclear weapons as the primary catalyst of the Cold War. Gar Alperovitz and Kai Bird, for example, assert that possession of nuclear weapons allowed the US to commit troops to Korea and rearm West Germany and that the consequent perception of threat by the Soviets led to the hardening of their position, the clamp-down on their European satellites, development of their own bomb, and so on. See their “The Centrality of the Bomb,” \textit{Foreign Policy} no. 94 (Spring 1994): 3-20.
technical improvements (for example, in reconnaissance and targeting, guidance, and command and control systems) led to a US-Soviet arms race of epic proportions.17

The size of the force maintained for these Cold War missions varied from administration to administration, but it remained larger and more ready for combat than any peacetime force in the nation’s history. It also served as a foundation upon which to build even larger forces when needed, as in the cases of the Korean and Vietnam wars. This post-war evolution to a large standing military was founded not only on the public perception of the Soviet threat but also on the public’s acceptance of military service as a norm and rite of passage for young men.18

The selective service system continued to operate along the same pattern as had been established in the world wars.19 However, from the beginning of the Korean War to the end of the conflict in Vietnam, the structure that had worked so well for those conflicts suffered great strain. While government policies and formal legislation from World War I forward would seem to have firmly established the government’s right to compel service, the system eventually collapsed under the weight of its perceived inequities and the burden of an unpopular war.

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17 For example, in the short period from 1953 to 1959 the US arsenal alone increased from 1,161 to 12,305 warheads. Millett and Maslowski, Common Defense, 541.


The beginning of the Korean War marked the first challenges to the process of conscription. Despite the intense fighting in some phases of the conflict, the requirements for combat soldiers were quite limited compared to the worldwide conflict for which the selective service system was designed. The manpower available, in terms of both gross population numbers and the military’s capacity to induct and train new soldiers, far exceeded the requirements for combat in Korea. Consequently, in 1951 the Department of Defense established a rotation policy for troops in Korea based on a point system and determined that draftees would serve for two years total rather than for the duration of the war. These policies ensured that individuals were treated “fairly,” but they were militarily unsound since the constant rotation of troops undermined unit cohesion, as did the understandable risk-aversion of men who had accumulated nearly enough points to rotate back to the United States.20

Because of the post-World War II baby boom, the selective service system shifted significantly toward selectivity and away from universality, and the percentage of those eligible who actually served steadily declined, even during the years of the Vietnam buildup. Eliot Cohen reports that, including reserve duty, 70 percent of 26-year-old males had served in the military in 1958. By 1964, that number was 46 percent. All told, only 40 percent of draft-age men served during the Vietnam years. The selective service system accommodated the increased population by increasing general

20 Bacevich, “Who Will Serve,” 88; Cohen, Citizen Soldiers, 103-5. The point system awarded four points per month to those in active combat; assignment anywhere in the combat zone from firing batteries rearward through regimental headquarters earned three points per month; and assignment anywhere in Korea earned at least two points per month. A total of 36 points was required for rotation – meaning the maximum tour in-country was 18 months. Men assigned to armored units were typically fastest in accumulating points, averaging around ten months; the average infantryman rotated in about a year. See T.H. Fehrenbach, This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness (New York: MacMillan Company, 1963; reprint Ft Leavenworth KS: US Army Command & General Staff College, 1994), 504.
deferments and instituting a program of “channeling” – inducing young men to enter educational and professional programs seen as more necessary to society than military service, especially those deemed important to the US competition with the Soviets.\textsuperscript{21} After the United States expanded its combat role in Vietnam and casualty rates rose dramatically, deferments and channeling became matters of life and death – and increasingly were considered arbitrary and unfair.\textsuperscript{22}

Another aspect of Vietnam personnel policies that drove perceptions of inequity was the refusal of President Johnson to mobilize reserve forces in any meaningful numbers. With the decision in 1965 to increase significantly the number of US troops and conduct offensive combat operations, and with each subsequent troop increase, military leaders lobbied for reserve mobilization, and the president refused.\textsuperscript{23} Among his reasons for doing so was his perception that the reserves were ineffective.\textsuperscript{24} More importantly, he was trying to “calibrate” the perceptions of both the American people and the Soviets and Chinese. In meetings with key Congressional leaders and the National Security Council, he presented the options for US action and his reasons for choosing to increase troop levels without putting the nation on a complete war footing.


\textsuperscript{22} Bacevich points out that a high school graduate was twice as likely to be drafted as a college graduate, and also twice as likely to be sent to Vietnam. In 1969, only 16 percent of the armed forces were draftees, but 88 percent of infantrymen in Vietnam were, and draftees comprised over half of combat deaths. See “Who Will Serve,” 88, 89.


\textsuperscript{24} Observing the partial reserve mobilization as vice-president during the Berlin crisis of 1961, he concluded that reserve mobilization was problematic and potentially more trouble than it was worth. BDM Corporation, “A Study of Strategic Lessons Learned in Vietnam, Volume V: Planning the War,” unpublished draft report (BDM/W-78-128-TR) submitted to US Army, DAMO-SSP, 4 April 1980, 4-6 to 4-9.
He told his advisers, “I think we can get our people to support us without having to be too provocative and warlike,” and emphasized to both groups that calling up the reserves, increasing military funding and draft calls, and declaring a state of emergency would lead to increased tensions with China and the USSR. He assumed their response would be increased aid to North Vietnam.25

In terms of support for military service, the impact of Vietnam personnel policies and the war in general undermined the moral authority of the government in compelling young men to serve. Polling results regarding conscription are telling. In 1956, 77 percent of the population supported the draft, by 1970 the percentage was just over half, and by 1972 it had dropped to 13 percent. Compliance with conscription was no longer seen as a societal duty. Rather, the draft became a useful threat (choose the right academic field or volunteer for the Air Force, or else you end up as an infantryman in the jungle).26 Bacevich emphasizes that opposition to the draft and the war became completely intermixed, and opposition to the draft inexorably evolved into opposition to military service in general.27

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26 Cohen, Citizen Soldiers, 164.

27 Bacevich, “Who Will Serve,” 89. Cohen, Citizen Soldiers, 108-9, makes clear the nature of opposition to the war and the draft was complex and varied across time and among social classes. There was little opposition at all before 1967. The upper and middle classes were more vocal and more consistent in their opposition to the draft and the war than members of the working class, who were often as opposed to the draft dodgers as to the war. Regardless of these variations, he argues the conduct of the war and the government’s military personnel policies led ultimately to widespread opposition to conscription. For more on problems, protests, and attempts at draft reform, see Flynn, The Draft, 188-223.
This precipitous decline in acceptance of conscription and support for military service led to the second momentous change in the process of raising and maintaining US military forces during the Cold War. Most deferments and loopholes in draft policy had ended with the selective service act of 1967. In 1970, the government established a lottery system, and in 1971, it called up only 19 year olds and those whose deferments had expired. Regardless, the perceptions of inequity persisted, and President Richard Nixon had entered office already considering an end to conscription. On 27 March 1969, he appointed former Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates to lead a commission to study the possibility of converting the US military to an all-volunteer force.\(^{28}\) Even before the commission had finished its work, Nixon indicated he was convinced it was necessary to end the draft.\(^{29}\) It is no surprise, then, that the Gates Commission report, presented in February of 1970, recommended establishing an all-volunteer force.\(^{30}\) Within the context of the nation’s history, this shift marked a sea change in the definition of military service. Sociologist David Segal contends that long-term trends toward increasing emphasis on individualism and rationality in US society significantly influenced the armed services. The militia model (however mythologized) was no longer useful. The concept of the armed services as just another segment of the labor

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\(^{28}\) Cohen, *Citizen Soldiers*, 165, 166.


market replaced the ideal of the citizen-soldier, with emphasis on economic incentives for enlistment and quality-of-life considerations for retention.  

*Industry and the Economy*

In considering the future of economic and industrial mobilization, Cold War decision makers again initially looked to World War II as a model. Since those initial considerations assumed the need for a mass military, they also had to consider the need to manage the allocation of manpower between the military forces and essential industrial production. President Truman issued a National Manpower Mobilization Policy on 17 January 1951 with a goal of efficiently and effectively managing the work force to ensure the nation’s security. This high-level concern with manpower management continued under President Eisenhower, who directed the Office of Defense Mobilization to study the “availability of manpower simultaneously to operate a military training program, to supply military personnel for active service and to meet the needs of the civilian economy … [and] indicate what the impact of such a program would be on

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31 David R. Segal, *Recruiting for Uncle Sam: Citizenship and Military Manpower Policy* (Lawrence KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 45, 67, 74-6. In making this assertion about motivation for service I am drawing a distinction between personal motivations and overarching cultural attitudes. While particular individuals may enter the military for reasons of service and patriotism, Segal’s research shows that the population as a whole sees military service largely as an economic choice. Indeed, the Gates Commission proceeded from the analytical premise that conscription is a form of taxation; see *Report on AVF*, 23-4. For detailed analysis of the all-volunteer force from 1973 through the end of the Cold War, see Rostker, *I Want You*, chapters 11-16.

32 Office of Defense Mobilization, *Manpower for Defense: Policies and Statements of the Office of Defense Mobilization* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1953), 3-5. This source includes subsequent statements issued by ODM implementing Truman’s policy – 15 in all, from “Manpower Programs for the Machine Tool Industry” to “Policy on Agricultural Manpower” to “Statement on Policy for Overtime Pay.” Interestingly, even though Truman’s policy explicitly called for “full use of women, handicapped workers, and minority groups” (5), the follow-on statements ignore the use of women in the labor force entirely. They do have limited discussion of minorities, and there is a separate policy statement on employment of the handicapped.
our manpower requirements for agricultural, scientific, professional, technical and skilled personnel.”

As the Cold War proceeded, however, there was less and less emphasis on this aspect of economic mobilization for the following reasons. First, the assumption gained primacy that any direct confrontation with the Soviets would be a “come as you are” war involving a nuclear cataclysm that would severely damage or even obliterate defense production facilities. Second, the indirect confrontations with the Soviets, such as the Korean and Vietnam wars, illustrated that the United States could support such military campaigns by relying on that portion of the economy already dedicated to military production, with no need to convert civilian industries. Finally, and most importantly, the rise of the military-industrial complex ensured that existing, almost entirely civilian-owned, defense production facilities were sufficient to provide military equipment in adequate quantities over extended periods of time, thus obviating the need for government management of the work force.

The overarching Cold War approach to military production was driven by two impulses. The first of these was the government’s desire to end or at least minimize its direct military production and let the free market operate, under the assumption that doing so would ensure the best products at the best prices. The second impulse, founded in strategic necessity, dictated close cooperation between the government and military on the one hand and industry on the other. Weapon systems had to meet strategic needs, and industry had to have the capability and capacity to meet government requirements.

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This marriage of ostensibly free market mechanisms with the close relationship between producers and the government as customer is the essence of the military-industrial complex.34

The advent of the military-industrial complex marked a transition from mobilizing industry for defense production as needed in time of war to the defense industry as a significant portion of the national economy. As weapons became “weapon systems,” complexity increased and design and production time and costs expanded by orders of magnitude. Naval production had been on this path since the turn of the century. After World War II, production of aircraft and missiles and their supporting systems followed the same course, as did development of tanks and other armored vehicles, helicopters, and so on.35

The perception of worldwide communism and the Soviet Union as an existential threat to the United States was fundamental to this transition. Because the strategy of containment depended on military power as a deterrent and was viewed as an open-ended commitment, the United States required a military-technical advantage, the maintenance of which was similarly open-ended. The military-industrial complex,

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35 See Allen Kaufman, “Assembling America’s Private Arsenal for Democracy, 1920-1961,” Business and Economic History 26, no. 1 (Fall 1997): 252-65. Kaufman, a professor of strategic management, traces the history of Air Force procurement policy, emphasizing how it deviated from the traditional pattern of government arsenals because of the need for rapid scientific/technological innovation and to support civilian manufacturing capability. His analysis clearly illustrates the intertwining of civilian industry with military requirements, as well as the important role of university research labs.
therefore, became a self-reinforcing system, which relied on a strategic logic that emphasized preparation for the absolute worst case of which the enemy might be capable. The Soviets followed a similar strategic logic, which resulted in a multi-dimensional arms race between the two super powers.\textsuperscript{36} The containment strategy and the arms race, therefore, required a continuous state of partial industrial mobilization, and the traditional distaste for and suspicion of war profits gave way to acceptance of the necessity of a permanent arms industry. As the Cold War obscured the boundary between peace and war, the continuous commitment to defense production blurred the boundary between civilian and war profits.\textsuperscript{37} In noting that defense spending was spread over every state, Congress’s Joint Economic Committee concluded, “defense procurement has become increasingly important as a factor affecting the economic stability and growth of our national economy.”\textsuperscript{38} As the fear of major war with the Soviets began to ebb in the mid-1960s, issues related to industrial preparedness receded.

\textsuperscript{36} That strategic logic also led to the conclusion that deficit spending was not only acceptable but necessary. For a particularly clear example of this thinking and the production goals it led to, see \textit{Survival in the Air Age, A Report by the President’s Air Policy Commission}, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1948), v, 9, 19, 22-3, 25-6, 28, \url{http://www.archive.org/stream/survivalinairage00unitrich#page/n7/mode/2up} (accessed 25 Mar 2011). This commission is known as the Finletter Commission, for its chairman, Thomas K. Finletter. Interestingly, the “enemy” is an abstract concept throughout this report; no actual nation is ever mentioned.

\textsuperscript{37} Brandes, \textit{Warhogs}, 274-5. The point on continuous partial mobilization is take from \textit{Survival in the Air Age}, 133-4.

in importance, becoming a topic for specialists and occasionally rising back to prominence depending on the temperature of US-Soviet relations.\(^{39}\)

In a similar manner, the Cold War marked a turning point in terms of funding choices. In general, presidents took pains to minimize the adverse impact of Cold War policies on the civilian economy. Rather than calling for sacrifice – problematic in the context of the open-ended Cold War strategy – they preferred an economy committed to both “guns and butter.” The question of financing national security shifted from wartime spending as a temporary burden to “defense spending” as a constant, baseline necessity comprising a significant portion of the federal budget. Over time, the attitude toward such spending evolved to an assumption that its effects on the wider economy were generally positive. Initially, however, both Presidents Truman and Eisenhower were committed to keeping a lid on defense spending and minimizing budget deficits.

As with most other aspects of Cold War mobilization, the Korean War was a catalyst not only for financing the Cold War defense buildup but also for confounding these presidential intentions.\(^{40}\) During the first year of the war (that is, Fiscal Year 1951), Truman submitted four supplemental budget requests to Congress.\(^{41}\) Increased income taxes (both corporate and personal), coupled with wage and price controls, served to finance the buildup and curb inflation, at the same time permitting continued

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\(^{39}\) For an example of the specialist literature, see Pfaltzgraff and Ra’an, *U.S. Defense Mobilization Infrastructure*.

\(^{40}\) Even before the war, the defense budget as a percentage of GNP was four times greater than in the 1930s. Additionally, in 1948-50, fifty percent of federal spending went toward security programs devoted to foreign economic aid and military assistance. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries*, 39-49.

growth of the economy. President Eisenhower was determined to keep defense spending in check, and in fact, reduced defense budgets to approximately 47 percent of federal spending (from 64 percent) and approximately 10 percent of GNP. However, Eisenhower’s post-Korea reductions never approached pre-war defense spending levels (the pre-war average annual total obligation authority of DOD was approximately $10.25 billion; the post-war average was approximately $30.25 billion). Similarly, the FY50 defense budget of $13 billion was approximately five percent of GNP, but by FY59, the defense budget of $45.7 billion was 58 percent of all government expenditures and just under 9 percent of GNP. The short-term result of this transition was a “badly distorted economy,” with a shift to security requirements driving spending and a disregard for balanced budgets.

President Johnson’s decisions regarding financing the Vietnam War further distorted the economy. Concerned with preserving the funding for his Great Society programs and domestic support for the war, he did his best to conceal its costs. In 1965, he requested only $400 million from Congress despite estimates of $2 billion necessary to support the major buildup of troops. He requested another $1.7 billion in September of that year, but again the amount was a fraction of the estimates of what was needed to

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44 Miller, *Funding Extended Conflicts*, 41 and 18, Fig. 3.1.


support the contemplated troop numbers. Not all members of Congress were fooled, but they were still stunned in January 1966 when the president asked for $12.7 billion in supplemental funds to finance the war through the end of the fiscal year in June. Given that request, they might also have been more than a little puzzled a few days later when they received the budget for fiscal year 1967 that included only $10 billion for the war for the entire year. Johnson also rejected his economic advisers’ recommendations that he call for tax increases. By mid-1967, the budget deficit had risen to $28 billion – at least twice what the administration had predicted only six months earlier – and he finally went to Congress with a request for a ten percent tax increase on corporate and individual income.48

Over the course of the Cold War, the government extended the precedent of spending beyond means and failure to balance the budget to many non-defense programs. The long-term effects also included a skyrocketing national debt, with the acceptability of that ever-increasing debt tied to the assumption of an ever-expanding economy. Although individual presidents came to office with various plans for defense financing and controlling the deficit, the changes engendered by the initial Cold War buildup, as catalyzed by the Korean conflict and continued through the Vietnam War, were never turned back.

48 Robert Mann, The Grand Delusion: America’s Descent into Vietnam (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 451, 478-9, 511-2, 553. The deception engaged in by Johnson and McNamara was not a matter of denying that costs were going to increase, but rather that they had already increased beyond the supplemental and budget requests previously submitted. For example, McNamara testified regarding the $1.7 billion supplemental requested 4 Aug 1965 while knowing that costs incurred for ongoing troop increases and planned future increases would greatly exceed this amount. On this point, see Miller, Funding Extended Conflicts, 45-6, 49. Stanley Karnow also discusses Johnson’s efforts to “cook the books” on war costs throughout his presidency; see his Vietnam: A History (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 501-2.
Creating Public Support

Because of the perceived danger of communist subversion and the need for public acceptance of the nation’s greater role in international affairs, government leaders put special emphasis on the home front. Policy makers needed the public to understand the Cold War was no less real for being “cold” and the (almost inevitable) hot war would likely entail a massive, surprise nuclear attack on the US.\textsuperscript{49} The authors of NSC-68, in particular, wanted to ensure the American people were clear about the nature of the threat they faced. Their explanations had the desired effect on public opinion. By May 1950, 61 percent of the US public supported assistance to Europe. The people also evinced a strong anti-communist sentiment and a strong belief that war would come soon.\textsuperscript{50} Six months before the start of the Korean War, 70 percent of the US public thought the Soviet goal was to rule the world.\textsuperscript{51}

Government leaders succeeded in engendering a relatively consistent level of public support from the Korean War through the 1960s, focused on collective defense of the “free world,” wariness of Soviet power and intentions, and the notion that in the competition for military power, the United States should stay ahead. The perception that defense spending was not much of a burden buttressed this public support, and some expenditures (such as building the interstate highway system, high-tech research and

\textsuperscript{49} Grossman, “Preparing for Cold War,” 72, 74.

\textsuperscript{50} Christensen, \textit{Useful Adversaries}, 128. This period was not unique in regard to anti-communist opinion. The 1920s and 30s saw similar sentiments, including various “Red scares.”

development, and industries like aviation and electronics) were perceived as serving a societal good beyond just defense.\textsuperscript{52}

The Truman administration set the tone and established the foundation for public mobilization, and subsequent administrations echoed its description of the threat and other key points through the end of the Cold War. Truman laid the cornerstone in an address to Congress on 12 March 1947 announcing the policies that became known as the Truman Doctrine. In the speech, he told the members and the public that totalitarian regimes threatened US security by undermining international order, and declared “that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”\textsuperscript{53} In June, Secretary of State George Marshall outlined a program for European economic recovery (the so-called Marshall Plan), financed primarily by the United States. He also warned that “governments, political parties, or groups which wish to perpetuate human misery in order to profit therefrom politically or otherwise will encounter the opposition of the United States.”\textsuperscript{54}

Dean Acheson has noted that while the public might sympathize with the suffering people of Europe and Asia, their inevitable focus was “how Marshall aid operated to block the extension of Soviet power and the acceptance of Communist

\textsuperscript{52} Millett and Maslowski, \textit{Common Defense}, 534.


\textsuperscript{54} George C. Marshall, “Commencement Address at Harvard University, 5 June 1947” in Langston, 70-1.
economic and political organization and alignment.” It was clear to all members of the administration that the message that truly resonated and would result in approval for increased government spending focused on the threat posed by communism in general and the Soviet Union (and later China) in particular. The administration consequently shifted its rhetoric in justifying the new US international role and the accompanying budget increases.

George Kennan’s now famous article, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” published in the July 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs* under the pseudonym, “X,” played a key role in this rhetorical shift and presented the case for the nation’s open-ended commitment to the containment strategy. In the article, he emphasized the Soviets’ long-term view that antagonism and confrontation with capitalist nations were inevitable. He therefore recommended that the “main element of any United States policy … must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” He went on to assert that this duel against the Soviets would be of “infinite duration.” Nowhere in the article did Kennan mention a need for overwhelming military power or military conflict with the Soviets. Nevertheless, it is easy to see how his message would feed into more alarmist language regarded as necessary to ensure public understanding of the threat the nation faced. Indeed, Acheson

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justified such language with his well-known claim that the government’s message had to be “clearer than truth.”

Truman’s rhetoric, and that of subsequent Cold War presidents, treated the threat of communism from two perspectives. The first was a traditional perspective of a national enemy with vast military power, its own collection of vassal states, and aspirations of conquest. The second, equally important perspective, was a matter of ideology, psychology, propaganda, and ideas – in other words, a clash of fundamental values. From this perspective, communism caused the decay of moral standards and democratic institutions from within. It was this depiction of the threat that engendered the most visceral and committed form of opposition from the public. The ideas and values of communism were frightening because they were seductive to the downtrodden, unwary, and unsophisticated. Communist agents were depicted as expert at infiltrating a society and seizing control by promising equality and economic gains, only to throttle that society with the iron fist of tyranny once they had gained control. Communism was, therefore, a contagious disease against which society had to be inoculated.

The danger of the communist contagion spreading around the world and infecting the United States provided a ready avenue for selling the strategy of containment and the US buildup called for by NSC-68. Edward Barrett, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, recognized that opponents would balk at the cost of the program and raise

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the specter of America becoming a “garrison state.” He consequently emphasized that the government would need to create public awareness of the threat and show that the strategy of NSC-68 was the solution by “whipping up public support” using a “psychological scare campaign.”

At the same time, Acheson (by early 1950, the Secretary of State) and other administration leaders were aware that such rhetoric was highly problematic because of the potential to create a public impetus for a “dangerous escalation” of the confrontation with the USSR. They were determined to walk a fine line – to hammer home the message regarding the seriousness of the Soviet threat, but also emphasizing that the country needed a steady, cool commitment to building up long-term power that would make the futility of an attack obvious to any potential enemy. Most foreign policy decision makers at the time were convinced that public opinion was prone to volatility and that, all told, they had to be as concerned with public overreaction as with underreaction. Careful tailoring of the government’s message, therefore, was crucial. For example, Acheson warned against “foolish talk about preventive war” and the “common tendency for people who are putting their whole hearts and souls into a great task to think in terms of logical absolutes,” thus viewing war as inevitable instead of something the US military buildup was trying to prevent.

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In disseminating that message, the new medium of television was added to the available tools and the “presidential address to the nation” became a staple of government communication, especially when an administration wanted to convey a particularly important message or explain government actions in response to a crisis. Television became important because of its growing reach across the country. The number of homes with televisions increased exponentially during the first decade of the Cold War - from 1 million in 1949 to 4 million in 1950 to 12 million in 1951.62 Television journalists found the relationship with the government beneficial because of the ready availability of new and “cheap” content, and while they regarded themselves as professional purveyors of truth, to a large degree they fully supported the government’s anti-communist policies and actions.63

Other private companies and organizations also (more or less) voluntarily supported the government’s message. For example, film studio executives, writers, and actors extended a notion of social responsibility first enunciated during World War II to their role in the Cold War. As the Cold War took shape, they continued to engage in “sociological propaganda” (so labeled by French philosopher Jacques Ellul), supporting government policies and the status quo by reassuring the public, fostering adaptation to new threats, and manufacturing consensus. The studios cooperated with the military in making war dramas and movies illustrating the value of new technologies that would assure victory and produced many works extolling the virtues of democracy while


warning of the dangers of communism. The moviemakers were also responding to pressures created by the 1947 hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Across popular culture, “Red Fascism” was presented as a combination of the worst features of the Nazis and Japanese. From movies to novels to comic books and especially television, the threat of communism was insidious, represented by the “femme fatale” tempting the all-American hero and the nameless “infection” running rampant through society in science fiction thrillers. The plots were packed with communist spies hunted by brave American investigators.

One method of inoculating society against that disease was the nationwide civil defense education and training program used by the government in the 1950s. Without a “hot war” to focus the attention and participation of the public, civil defense was analogous to the victory gardens, rationing, and scrap metal collections of World War II. The primary focus of civil defense education and training was “de-sensitizing” the public regarding nuclear weapons, to prevent panic in the event that worst-case assumptions regarding Soviet intentions were true. Beyond the overarching federal

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64 J. Hoberman, “Laugh, Cry, Believe: Spielbergization and Its Discontents,” *Virginia Quarterly Review* (Winter 2007): 119-20. The Hollywood Writers Congress formed in October 1943 was “dedicated to the proposition that … movies had the power to influence human behavior, help defeat the Axis, and positively shape the postwar world.” Hoberman points out as time passed there was less and less consensus on exactly what Hollywood’s social responsibility entailed. The studios’ output ran the gamut from movies celebrating the virtues of Strategic Air Command to *Failsafe* and *Seven Days in May* depicting the dangers of nuclear Armageddon and the military run amuck to outright criticism masquerading as farce in *Dr. Strangelove*, not to mention a host of pro- and anti-Vietnam War movies.

65 On this point and for a thorough analysis of the general political and social context as it influenced the film industry in the late 1940s and 1950s, see Daniel J. Leab, “How Red Was my Valley: Hollywood, the Cold War Film, and *I Married a Communist*,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 19, no. 1 (January 1984): 59-88.

program, a second aspect of civil defense was devolved to local communities to encourage “regimentation, crisis training, and crisis management.” This second layer reinforced the efforts of the central government, facilitated training exercises and behavior modification (for example, air raid shelter drills in cities and “duck and cover” drills in schools), and had explicit goals regarding conditioning and social control.  

The civil defense program achieved a key aspect of public mobilization by “nationalizing” the security discussion. Security became everyone’s problem, the danger extended to everyone, and everyone had to contribute willingly to the solution. However, by the Kennedy administration, Secretary of Defense McNamara rejected the program as both strategically and economically unwise. While some lives might be saved in the event of an attack, he considered the money better spent on offensive weapons and deterrent capabilities. After the Cuban missile crisis, both nations carefully avoided such direct confrontation in favor of proxy state conflicts, and public anxiety about Soviet intentions ebbed, resulting in abandonment of civil defense efforts. In doing so, the government discarded one of its few means to engender active mobilization of the public in supporting its Cold War strategy.

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67 To ensure the program was disseminated effectively across the country, the Civil Defense Act of 1950 created the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA). Grossman, “Preparing for Cold War,” 69-74, 75.

68 Ibid., 94-5.

69 Sociologist Davis Bobrow discovered that public attitudes were congruent with McNamara’s assessments. Analyzing data from National Opinion Research Center surveys of 1963 and 1964, he found no correlation between survey respondents’ evaluation of the desirability of passive defense measures (i.e., civil defense) and their expectation of surviving a nuclear attack. Instead, they tended to evaluate civil defense measures in terms of “domestic issues” like cost. See “Organization of American National Security Opinions,” Public Opinion Quarterly 33, no. 2 (Summer 1969): 233-5.

70 Millet and Maslowski, Common Defense, 557, 610.
Even though the government put great effort into controlling and conveying the Cold War message, it is difficult to judge definitively its effectiveness for the following reasons. The first is simply because the Cold War extended over such a long period. The second is because through much of that time there was little national “action” in the traditional sense of mobilization for war against which to judge the government’s influence. And the third is because of the effects of the intervening hot wars. One potentially useful indicator of public mobilization is the degree of consensus centered on the strategy of containment. Political scientists Eugene Wittkopf and James McCormick examined a wide variety of public opinion data gathered from the late 1940s to the mid-1980s and found credible support for the conventional wisdom that a foreign policy consensus existed throughout Cold War. They also note, however, that the dissension engendered by the Vietnam War eroded this consensus and that within the overarching consensus, underlying ideas exhibited much variability.71

The consensus is most clearly displayed in the view that communism posed a definite threat to the United States. In the early 1950s, approximately two-thirds of the American public considered it more important to stop communism than to avoid war. Consistently from 1953 to 1982, polls showed a strong dislike, fear, and mistrust of the USSR/Russia. For example, in September of 1954 only four-tenths of a percent of respondents indicated a favorable impression of Russia, while 91.1 percent indicated an unfavorable impression. Admittedly, the fears engendered by the Korean War

71 Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick, “The Cold War Consensus: Did It Exist?” *Polity* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 651-3. The authors emphasize the appropriate caveats regarding the dangers inherent in summarizing across variations in polling questions and context as well as the effects of intervening variables. While caution is warranted, their analysis is convincing.
influenced these extreme results. Nevertheless, even during the period of détente in the mid- to late-1970s, large majorities of the public, ranging from 62 to 75 percent, indicated they were worried or concerned about both the Soviet Union and the general threat of communism a “great deal” or “fair amount,” and from 44 to 54 percent considered communism the worst form of government.72

The dissension resulting from the Vietnam War constituted the most significant challenge to the overall context of Cold War public mobilization. Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy had framed US commitments of money, military equipment, and troops as part of the overall strategy of confronting communist aggression. President Johnson echoed these justifications. He described the war as part of a larger pattern of Chinese aggression, with North Vietnam being supported and encouraged by China. He also characterized South Vietnam as an independent nation, attacked by the North. Johnson then explained the reasons for US involvement, emphasizing that since 1954, every US president had conveyed the promise of the nation to defend and support South Vietnam.73 He also identified larger issues at stake, especially American credibility as an ally, declaring that leaving Vietnam would end nothing, that the conflict would just move to the next battlefield chosen by the communists. He argued that the US must,


73 The US tied itself formally to the defense of South Vietnam through the terms of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (signed by the US, Australia, France, the UK, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand on 8 Sep 1954). The signatories pledged to come to the aid of each other in the event of attack – and also to aid any other state or territory designated afterwards by unanimous agreement. The same day, they signed a protocol extending the agreement to Laos, Cambodia, and “the free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Vietnam.” The protocol, and to a large extent the treaty itself, was a US initiative intended to justify its continued involvement in Southeast Asia. Thus, the US, of its own volition, enmeshed itself in the politics of Southeast Asia. For the text of the SEATO treaty, see Langston, Cold War Presidency, 136.
instead, draw the line in Vietnam, just as it had in Europe.\textsuperscript{74} However, he continually downplayed the level of US commitment, even as he announced the decisions that would place US troops in an offensive combat role.\textsuperscript{75}

Johnson recognized that a limited war presented problems in the realm of public support. He felt he needed to be able to “control” public fervor, that too much support would be as bad as too little. White House aide Harry McPherson identified the problem as the need to rally support, “just so far.”\textsuperscript{76} Johnson’s efforts ranged from assurances that he had no intention of “sending American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing,”\textsuperscript{77} to policy statements (above) that emphasized the importance of drawing the line against communist aggression. He also made a concerted effort to cultivate the support of the primary news outlets, such as the \textit{New York Times} and \textit{Washington Post}; \textit{Time}, \textit{Newsweek}, and \textit{U.S. News and World Report}; and, especially, the television networks.\textsuperscript{78} The administration sponsored trips to

\textsuperscript{74} Lyndon B. Johnson, “Address at Johns Hopkins University, 7 April 1965” in Langston, 243–4. Brewer points out that Johnson’s argument that other allies would not trust US promises if it pulled out of Vietnam was undermined when key allies refused to support US policies, refused to contribute troops, and advocated a negotiated solution. See \textit{Why America Fights}, 192.

\textsuperscript{75} When asked in July 1965 whether the deployment of elements of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Cavalry Division and the 173\textsuperscript{rd} Separate Brigade (Airmobile), the doubling of monthly draft calls, and a stepped up effort to recruit volunteers for the military signified a change in US policy, he replied they did not. Johnson, “President’s New Conference of 28 July 1965,” \textit{Public Papers, 1965}, Book II, 801. Pat Proctor finds that while Johnson and his advisers tried to conceal and downplay the steady increase in US involvement, they were actually not successful in doing so. The media reported it all and often anticipated continued escalation, and public support for administration actions remained high. Proctor highlights an important point in concluding the US public was at least partially complicit in the Vietnam escalation – rather than being totally deceived as is the common historical interpretation. See his “Message versus Perception during the Americanization of the Vietnam War,” \textit{Historian} 73, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 88-112.

\textsuperscript{76} Langston, \textit{Cold War Presidency}, 222.

\textsuperscript{77} During the 1964 election campaign; Karnow, \textit{Vietnam}, 411.

\textsuperscript{78} For a thought-provoking and well-developed analysis of the historical relationship between the media and the US government, see Timothy E. Cook, \textit{Governing with the News: The News Media as a
Southeast Asia for reporters, providing background kits and military tour guides. These efforts paid off as at least until 1968, with few exceptions, the media conveyed and reinforced administration messages with little questioning of US policies.\(^{79}\)

The government’s reaction to opposition was similar to the reaction during World War I. Early in the Cold War, especially, the virulent anti-communist sentiment that swept over the country overwhelmed all dissent. The impulses of those individuals who considered communism a true existential threat, often combined with more cynical political ploys, resulted in the familiar litany of excesses of the period – House and Senate investigations of “un-American activities,” the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover collecting dossiers on dissidents of any persuasion, and ultimately, Senator Joseph McCarthy’s (R-WI) use of “innuendo, distortion, and lies to attack people in the government and civil service as communist dupes and spies.”\(^{80}\) Even though this virulence had subsided considerably as early as the mid-1950s (McCarthy was sanctioned by his Senate colleagues in 1954), the government had used its power to intimidate citizens and many thousands had lost their jobs. In addition to such direct effects, the indirect effects – self-censorship, intolerance, and suppression of public

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\(^{79}\) On the administration’s cultivation of the media, see Brewer, *Why America Fights*, 180-1, 187.

discourse – were considerable and lingering. Substantive opposition to US policy was stifled throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.81

Only with the advent of questions regarding the US commitment in Vietnam was there significant opposition to any Cold War policy. By the summer of 1964, antiwar sentiment was starting to register in a small but coherent way, and there were occasional chinks in the armor of the government’s message. Some reporters raised questions regarding inconsistencies in government reports and excessively rosy depictions of events. The corruption of the South Vietnamese government was readily apparent, and social unrest in that country (especially the protests and repression of the Buddhists) could not be hidden. It was an open secret that US advisers often led combat missions, and those same advisers often openly complained about the incompetence of the South Vietnamese Army. In August 1965, a report by CBS journalist Morley Safer showed film of US Marines using their cigarette lighters to set fire to huts in a village from which they had taken fire. As the negative reporting began to grow, the military established a program, Operation Maximum Candor, to convey the “correct” story. But those reporters who made the effort to report from the field recognized the obfuscation, euphemisms, misinformation, omissions, and outright lies surrounding the occasional truths and dubbed these daily briefings the “Five O’Clock Follies.”82

81 Chatfield, “American Insecurity,” 469; Schrecker, “McCarthyism,” 1041-86. Polls showed that even into the mid-1970s two-thirds of the public considered the American communist party either “some” or a “great” danger to the country; three-fourths felt that party members should be under surveillance; and 40-50 percent felt that a self-proclaimed communist should not be allowed to speak publicly or hold a college teaching position. See Smith, “Polls,” 289, 290. For an example of how one leading liberal organization, the National Farmers Union, deliberately adopted more centrist/conservative positions in response to the pressures of McCarthyism, see William C. Pratt, “The Farmer’s Union, McCarthyism, & the Demise of the Agrarian Left,” Historian 58, no.2 (Winter 1996): 329-42.

82 Brewer, Why America Fights, 187-8, 196, 199.
In September 1967, the Johnson administration created the “Progress Campaign,” also intended to counter the mounting questions about the war and domestic opposition. The campaign focused on positive news – statistics showing heavy enemy casualties and high proportions of secure villages, with emphasis on the good performance of the South Vietnamese Army in combat. Of most importance, the commander of US forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, returned to the United States in November to proclaim great progress. He asserted that the United States would be able to leave the Vietnamese in charge within two years. The reporters in Vietnam were not convinced. They frequently highlighted the ambiguities and inconsistencies in what they saw compared to the government’s positive reports. Nevertheless, the campaign had an influence on US public opinion, and by the end of 1967, half of the American people were convinced the US was making progress.83 When Viet Cong forces launched the Tet Offensive on 30 January 1968, the public was stunned. The contrast between the assurances of progress and the actual military capabilities exhibited by the communist guerillas undermined the entire government message. The tactical victory of US troops over the attacking forces across South Vietnam could not overcome the psychological shock and perceptions of government lies and military defeat.84


84 The administration’s credibility problem is exemplified by the reaction of CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite (“the most trusted man in America”), who, in a half-hour special report on 27 Feb 1968, debunked the claims of progress and victory and told his vast audience the US was “mired in stalemate.” Marilyn B. Young, John J. Fitzgerald, and A. Tom Grunfeld, The Vietnam War: A History in Documents (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 87. Johnson also faced growing opposition in Congress; among the most significant was Senator J. William Fulbright. On Fulbright’s evolution from supporter of Kennedy’s and Johnson’s activist foreign policy to opponent, see Randall Bennett Woods, “The Rhetoric
Even before the shock of Tet, the antiwar movement had begun to gain momentum. By 1967, Protestant church leaders, civil rights leaders (including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.), university professors, and students were joining forces to protest the war. That same year, half a dozen former military members formed Vietnam Veterans Against the War, which had grown to 600 members by 1970 and experienced exponential growth after that. A coalition of antiwar groups declared a “Moratorium to End the War” in October-November 1969, with hundreds of thousands around the country participating in marches and listening to speeches. Protestors teamed up with Madison Avenue ad writers to create an “Unsell the War” campaign in 1970, creating high-quality television, radio, and print advertisements. Many of the protests turned into violent clashes with police – the most well-known examples being the 1968 riots in Chicago during the Democratic presidential nominating convention and

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86 Young, Fitzgerald, and Grunfeld, *Vietnam War Documents*, 124-7, 137.

87 They had limited success in getting the ads into mainstream media because of distribution costs, and major media outlets were reluctant to air or print them gratis, but they did garner coverage of the campaign as “news.” Mitchell Hall, “Unsell the War: Vietnam and Antiwar Advertising,” *Historian* 58, no. 1 (Autumn 1995): 69-86; Brewer, *Why America Fights*, 221-2. For examples of antiwar ads, see “Front Matter,” *Chicago Review* 24, no. 2 (1972). For examples of the content of antiwar posters, see Josh Brown and Ellen Noonan, “ Calls to Action: Posters of the Anti-Vietnam War Movement,” *Radical History Review* 78 (Fall 2000): 141-8.
the Kent State University protests where soldiers of the Ohio National Guard killed four students.  

The government’s reaction to the war protestors ranged from helpless bemusement to violent suppression. Officials often dismissed students as dilettantes, protesting for the fun of it, and derided professors as misfits and mediocre intellectuals. Johnson administration representatives highlighted “hippies” and acts the majority of Americans would find offensive (such as protestors carrying the Viet Cong flag or urinating on the Pentagon). They were quick to label protestors as extremists and claimed they were communists or directed by communists. They also charged them with prolonging the war by aiding the enemy. In 1965, the Justice Department initiated a nationwide investigation of the protest movement at the direction of Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach. The administration also sent “truth squads” to campuses to present the government position. Behind the scenes, it supported the New York City “Support Our Boys in Vietnam” parade and the National Committee for Peace and Freedom in Vietnam (with Presidents Truman and Eisenhower as honorary chairmen). The government also used the mainstream media, which was often complicit in undermining and trivializing the antiwar movement.

88 Young, Fitzgerald, and Grunfeld, *Vietnam War Documents*, 141.

89 On these points, see Fendrich, “Forgotten Movement,” 346, 348-9 and Brewer, *Why America Fights*, 203. Melvin Small, in *Covering Dissent: The Media and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994) emphasizes the complexities and nuances of media coverage and debunks the common post-war charge of “liberal” media bias favoring the antiwar movement and “losing the war” by leading public opinion. He finds instead that media coverage undermined the antiwar message and inhibited the majority mainstream public from sympathizing with or joining it by highlighting violent confrontations with police and the most radical antiwar positions and featuring the colorful counter-cultural (i.e., hippies) aspects of the movement.
President Richard Nixon’s response to war opponents was “quantitatively and qualitatively different” than Johnson’s, amounting to a planned and coordinated “program of political repression.”90 Despite a lack of evidence, Nixon was convinced that the antiwar protestors were supported by “international communism.” J. Edgar Hoover assigned up to 2,000 FBI agents to investigating and preventing dissent. Attorney General John Mitchell authorized wiretaps and break-ins and pursued indictments and trials of demonstration organizers, notably those in Chicago. The government also provided federal funding to local police departments for repressive activities. Nixon and Vice-President Spiro Agnew used the power of their offices to try to intimidate the media and mobilize public anger against war opponents. Nixon used the FBI, IRS, National Security Agency, and CIA to gather information and harass organizations and individuals of all stripes on his “enemies list.”91

Despite the fact that the activist opponents never comprised more than a small percentage of the total population, they were successful in influencing public perceptions of the war and the government. It is important to note that the antiwar protestors had a key advantage over the government. While President Johnson refused to mobilize the country, the antiwar activists engaged in a concrete program of mobilization, drawing others to actions such as peace marches, sit-ins, and burning draft cards.92 These activities carried a disproportionate weight since there was little initiative from the

90 Fendrich, “Forgotten Movement,” 351.

91 On these points, see Ibid., 351 and Brewer, Why America Fights, 213-6, 218. For a comprehensive history of the antiwar movement, see Melvin Small, Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988). Small is a well-respected and prolific analyst of the Vietnam antiwar movement.

92 Brewer, Why America Fights, 202-3.
government to counteract them. They consequently had a definite impact on the policies and decision-making of both presidents Johnson and Nixon, and the movement “played a major role in constraining, de-escalating, and ending the war.”

Conclusion

Mobilization for the Cold War provided the impetus for and was coincident with a general shift in emphasis of US foreign policy to military competition and confrontation. The lessons taken from the Second World War led the American public to accept an assertive role for the United States on the world stage, but within a specific framework of risk perception. The war had seemingly taught that totalitarianism (in any form) anywhere was a threat to the United States because totalitarian governments were insatiable. Consequently, the world (led by the United States) would have to stand up to “bullies” – negotiations were virtually synonymous with appeasement. Additionally, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had illuminated the risk of surprise attack that when coupled with long-range delivery systems and nuclear weapons would require constant vigilance, forever.

These basic impulses provided the foundation for the specific characteristics of Cold War mobilization. The open-ended characterization of the communist/Soviet threat over an indefinite period resulted in confrontation with a “universalized, ideological challenge” as the focus of US foreign policy. This universalized challenge led to a

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94 Wesley W. Widmaier, “Constructing Foreign Policy Crises: Interpretive Leadership in the Cold War and War on Terrorism,” International Studies Quarterly 51, no. 4 (December 2007): 787-8. Widmaier’s work, based on international relations theory, is a constructivist analysis of two major shifts in US foreign policy – Truman’s articulation of Cold War doctrine and President George W. Bush’s speeches
consistently expanding list of foreign policy objectives, military missions, and geographic locations subsumed under the overarching goal of containing the threat. The containment strategy thus required a large standing military force, armed with increasingly complex weapon systems. The rapid pace of technical advancement of these weapons, coupled with the danger of surprise attack (perceived by both sides) engendered an arms race focused on both numbers of weapons and technological advantage. As a result, the arms industry remained permanently mobilized, defense spending became a significant element of the national economy, and long-term deficit spending was accepted as necessary to national security. The military-industrial complex thus reached its mature form. Finally, the government sold the containment strategy by reinforcing the public’s fear of communism, using a simplistic, worst-case, “clearer than truth” message. The emphasis on the enemy as an ideology, coupled with the nation’s idealized mission to “save the world,” served as a powerful and effective force in mobilizing the public. These characteristics operated in combination to create the condition of “perpetual mobilization” required of the Cold War national security state, and as they evolved over the almost half century of the Cold War, they came to be accepted as the “normal” mode of mobilization.

At the same time, these changed processes served to undermine the very concept of mobilization, especially when applied to the limited wars of the period. The continuous partial mobilization of the defense economy, combined with the large standing military, required little if any further mobilization in the event of crisis or war.

of September 2001 announcing the “war on terror.” He views both as constructed perspectives, dependent on US culture and societal proclivities.
Even more significant was the undercutting of traditional processes of public mobilization. The nature of the Cold War led naturally to a dichotomy between the “war” and the lives of the population. Dependent as it was on the long-term economic health of the country and support of the public, the government had to focus on delivering both guns and butter. Sacrifices of the kind demanded in the world wars would have been untenable for the open-ended confrontation with the Soviets. Consequently, the government had less and less call to mobilize the public to take definite actions. After the demise of the civil defense program and, especially, after the end of the draft, the public was reduced to watching from the sidelines and simply supporting the government’s actions. The Vietnam War accelerated this breakdown of the foundation of public mobilization. The obfuscations, half-truths, and outright lies of the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations undermined the public’s trust in government. While the American people remained adamantly opposed to communism and consistently viewed both the Soviets and the Chinese as potential threats, the government’s credibility in promulgating its simplistic, “clearer than truth” approach to the containment strategy was significantly damaged. These factors, together, determined the shape of mobilization after the Cold War.
CHAPTER 5
A POST-COLD WAR INTERLUDE: THE EVOLUTION OF “VIRTUAL” MOBILIZATION

In the post-Cold War 1990s, the United States was the preeminent power in the world – militarily, economically, and politically. This status allowed a long-standing American narrative regarding the historical role of the United States in the world to come to the fore. Labeled idealism, or sometimes “Wilsonianism,” this narrative includes the exceptionalist view that the United States is “different from other nations” with a “unique historical mission;” a universalist view that Western notions of liberty, democracy, and equality are applicable and desirable across all cultures; and a messianic view that the historical mission of the United States is to promote these values around the world, “not only by example but also by energetic action.”

As Americans celebrated their “victory” in the Cold War, many also saw US preeminence during the period as an opportunity for a “peace dividend” – a chance to reduce commitments of manpower, economic, and other resources to national security issues. The military and other national security organizations (such as the CIA) were reduced in size. Defense budgets were also decreased. Additionally, a number of procurement programs were slowed or eliminated, and Congress agreed on a process for considering closure of existing military bases (the Base Realignment and Closure Commission). While these reductions were significant, the government told the American public that even though the communist bogeyman had been defeated, it was still a “dangerous world.” The United States had to remain vigilant, the military had to

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be “ready for anything,” and the national security policy was still focused in large part on deterring even potential enemies (usually unnamed, but the presumed menace of China was always lurking in the future).

Regardless of the benefits of peace, the United States remained to a noteworthy extent a mobilized nation in accordance with the pattern established during the Cold War. Despite the force reductions and budget cuts, the military-industrial complex and standing all-volunteer force constituted a continuously mobilized capability. While the public was often in general agreement with defense reductions, when those cutbacks were aimed at military facilities or defense industries in their communities, they were just as often vociferously opposed, to retain the jobs associated with those facilities and industries. Additionally, a large majority of the public was unquestioning of the operation of the military-industrial complex and the maintenance of the all-volunteer force. The American people also generally accepted the need for US leadership on the world stage and thus, the commitments of military forces to various conflicts, although they still expected the president to explain the reasons for such actions and were often intolerant of extended obligations or casualty levels that were too high. In sum, the pattern of mobilization established with the Cold War continued during the immediate post-Cold War period. At the same time, the nature of mobilization continued to evolve, generally along trends established during the Cold War, but also becoming more “virtual” because of the nature of post-Cold War conflicts.² This virtual element of

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² The concept of “virtual” mobilization is adapted from Michael Ignatieff’s *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000).
mobilization was most apparent in the increasing separation of the American people from the military operations conducted in their name.

During this period, the United States committed military forces in a wide range of situations, from all-out war to humanitarian relief operations. A single case study would be inadequate to illustrate the nature of mobilization for such a wide variety of circumstances. Consequently, three examples will be used to illustrate that variety and the nature of mobilization during this decade. The first example is the 1991 Persian Gulf War – on the “high end” of the spectrum with almost 500,000 US troops combating Iraqi forces in Kuwait. The second example is on the low end – the UN/US commitment to humanitarian relief operations in Somalia. The third example is the NATO/US mission in the Balkans, including peacekeeping and limited combat operations in both Bosnia and Kosovo. Despite the variety of circumstances of these examples, they shared the same basic characteristics: an idealist narrative to justify the US commitment, the “decoupling” of the American people from these conflicts to the point that they became a kind of “spectator sport,” the lack of impact on the economy and industry of the conflicts, and the relative lack of public debate and influence on the executive branch as the decisions to commit troops were taken.

**Threats and Objectives**

In the 1990s, the leaders of the United States articulated an expansive view of its interests, while at the same time trying to circumscribe narrowly the missions and objectives of its military forces when committed in service of those interests. American policy makers also took pains to ensure the nation’s military actions took place under the umbrella of international organizations – usually the United Nations, but in the case of
the Balkans, NATO. Of the cases considered in this chapter, the Persian Gulf War is the only one involving a direct threat to US interests. Iraq’s invasion and occupation of Kuwait undermined the political stability of the Gulf region and, thus, the steady supply of oil that was essential to the US economy. The US military commitments to Somalia and the Balkans served broad US interests, but neither situation posed a direct threat to them.

In reacting to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, President George H.W. Bush explicitly claimed that “U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf are vital to national security. These interests include access to oil and the security and stability of key friendly states in the region.” He also emphasized that the United States would use military force if necessary to defend those interests, and enumerated four principles that would guide the US response: the requirement for Iraqi forces to immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Kuwait; the restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait; the US commitment to maintaining “security and stability” in the region; and the protection of US citizens abroad.\(^3\)

President Bush also took great pains to assemble a coalition of nations to oppose the Iraqi aggression and to ensure the United Nations sanctioned US actions. To that end, the UN Security Council passed a series of resolutions which demanded the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and called for negotiations to resolve the crisis; declared Iraq’s claim of annexation of Kuwait legally invalid; and finally, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, allowed one final “pause of goodwill,” then

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authorized member states to take all necessary actions to implement previous resolutions (including use of military force).⁴

The president also worked to ensure congressional support of his actions, with somewhat mixed results. His initial deployment of troops to defend Saudi Arabia met with overwhelming approval. However, as it became clear that he was losing patience with attempts through diplomacy and economic sanctions to persuade Iraq to withdraw, congressional support was harder to obtain. Ultimately, a joint resolution authorizing the use of military force passed the Senate 52-47 and the House 250-183 just a few days before the beginning of the air attacks against Iraq.⁵

The Iraqi military was considered a significant threat and repeatedly described as the fourth largest in the world, well equipped, competent, and battle-tested after its recently concluded war with Iran. Based on intelligence identification of the units deployed, the Iraqi forces in Kuwait were estimated at 540,000. In reality, the Iraqi Army was neither as numerous nor as competent as estimated. Post-war analysis determined that almost all Iraqi units were considerably under strength, leading to estimates of fewer than 250,000, with perhaps as few as 183,000 actually deployed to

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Kuwait. Additionally, the morale of the troops invading Kuwait was low to begin with, and sank even lower after enduring the coalition bombing campaign.  

President Bush’s descriptions of the effort that would be required to oppose Iraqi aggression were contradictory. In his speech announcing the deployment of US troops to defend Saudi Arabia, he made a brief allusion to sacrifices, and went on to say, “Standing up for our principles will not come easy. It may take time and possibly cost a great deal.”  

On the other hand, when asked about the possibility of a specific sacrifice from the public, such as a war surtax, he offered assurances that that would not be necessary since the United States had commitments of $50-51 billion from other nations to help pay for the war. He also unequivocally rejected the possibility of reinstating the draft.  

President Bush’s rhetoric, however, implied that eventually the United States would be willing to do whatever was necessary to reverse the Iraqi aggression. In speech after speech, he declared that Iraq’s action “would not stand” while comparing Saddam Hussein to Hitler and the invasion of Kuwait to the Nazi invasion of Poland.  

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9 In an exchange with reporters on 5 August, Bush said, “This will not stand. This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait.” He repeated the phrase on numerous occasions, including 15, 23, 28 and 31 October, and 1 and 3 November. The comparisons to Hitler and the Nazis were even more numerous and
The use of historical analogies was particularly important to President Bush’s thinking about the crisis. In addition to the comparison with the invasion of Poland, he made specific and repeated references to the perceived lessons of the appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s and the micromanaged, gradualist approach the United States took in Vietnam. Together, these lessons almost inevitably led him to conclude that a military response would be necessary and that that response should be a maximum effort.\textsuperscript{10}

In contrast to the clear aggression of Saddam Hussein in Kuwait, US actions in Somalia were a response to the chaos and imminent widespread starvation in that brutally poor country. Humanitarian relief organizations faced increasing difficulty in relieving the famine, as tribal warlords did not hesitate to use force to prevent food and other aid from reaching rival factions.\textsuperscript{11} The United Nations Security Council initially established a United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in April 1992 to facilitate relief operations.\textsuperscript{12} The situation continued to deteriorate, with aid shipments intercepted and workers attacked. At the end of the year, the Security Council responded with a resolution authorizing establishment of a unified military task force


(UNITAF) to protect the aid workers and “establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia.” President Bush announced the commitment of a Marine amphibious ready group, plus elements of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and the 10th Mountain Division, to Somalia as part of UNITAF. It was obvious the events in Somalia were peripheral to US interests, and he implied the United States would keep its involvement to a minimum, in terms of both time and resources.

It quickly became clear, however, that the mission to conduct famine relief by force of arms could, in fact, expand indefinitely because the situation in Somalia was close to anarchy. Without at least a semi-functioning central government and an end to the factional conflicts, any withdrawal of UN forces would leave the situation where it started. Accordingly, the Security Council agreed to expand the mission. Since restoration of law and order was essential for ending the famine, the council increased the size and extended the mandate of the UNOSOM force (which thereby became known as UNOSOM II), directing the “Force Commander of UNOSOM II to assume responsibility for the consolidation, expansion and maintenance of a secure environment throughout Somalia.” Newly elected President Bill Clinton agreed to support this change, and US forces served as an integral part of UNOSOM II.

The situation in Somalia continued to deteriorate rapidly over the summer of 1993, with no progress toward ending the violence. During 3-4 October, a major

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firefight occurred between UNOSOM forces (primarily US special operations troops, Army Rangers, and elements of the 10th Mountain Division) and forces of the warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid. During the battle, Aidid’s forces captured one and killed 18 US soldiers. Afterwards, crowds dragged the bodies of dead US soldiers through the streets of Mogadishu. There was an immediate outcry from Congress and the public, mostly focused on the speedy withdrawal of US troops from Somalia. By 7 October, President Clinton and congressional leaders had agreed that US forces would withdraw not later than 31 March 1994, pending the transition to UN operations, plus the recovery of the hostage and the bodies of the soldiers killed in action.¹⁵

At the same time the US was engaged in Somalia, the post-Cold War breakup of Yugoslavia led to civil war when Bosnia-Herzegovina declared independence from the Serb-dominated Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).¹⁶ NATO governments declared the deteriorating situation in Yugoslavia to be of “profound concern,” not only in Bosnia, but also in Kosovo, and warned that spillover or initiation of violence there “would require an appropriate response by the international community.” They


identified the leaders of Serbia and of the Bosnian Serbs as responsible for the conflict in Bosnia and emphasized that the territorial integrity of Bosnia must be restored.  

Although President Bush followed the NATO statement with a direct warning to President Milosevic that the United States was prepared to use force, US government officials found it difficult to reach a consensus on policy. Both Bush and Clinton initially took a hands-off approach, regarding the conflict as a European problem that Europeans should handle. The incoming Clinton administration held many inconclusive discussions, but finally decided the United States did have an interest in the outcomes in the region and, therefore, needed to be involved.

The United States and the other NATO nations initiated a series of military operations, economic sanctions, and diplomatic negotiations (the final round of which took place in Dayton, Ohio) designed to end the Serb aggression in Bosnia. They conducted humanitarian relief operations beginning in July 1992 and imposed a no-fly zone in April 1993, but these efforts were ineffective in influencing Serb behavior. Finally, in a crucial series of meetings during the first week of August 1995, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright convinced the president that US credibility as a leader in the UN and NATO was at stake, and,

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19 Madeleine Albright, with Bill Woodward, Madam Secretary (New York: Miramax Books, 2003), 180-1; on this point, see also Warren Christopher, In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 343-5.
therefore, more direct combat operations were required. Consequently, the United States and other NATO air forces attacked Bosnian Serb positions threatening safe areas that had been established to protect civilians. The Serbs finally agreed to a negotiated settlement, and the United States deployed ground forces in December 1995 as part of the Implementation Force and then the Stabilization Force, supervising implementation of the Dayton Accords signed on 14 December 1995. In all these US military operations, it was clear the Clinton administration, despite its interests in maintaining the credibility of NATO, saw no direct threat to the United States and, therefore, was as focused on minimizing the costs to and level of commitment of the United States as it was on stabilizing the Balkans.

These same considerations drove US actions in Kosovo, where, as the talks at Dayton brought the conflict over Bosnia to a close, the United States and NATO were trying to resolve the status of another breakaway portion of the former Yugoslavia. Despite year-long negotiations at Rambouillet, France, violence between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians had escalated. In response, the United Nations Security Council issued a resolution expressing “deep concern” about an impending humanitarian crisis in Kosovo and labeling the use of force by the Serbs as “excessive and indiscriminate.” Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic brought negotiations to a halt by launching an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Kosovar Albanians in January 1999. Consequently, under NATO authorization, the United States led an air campaign to force

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21 Martel, Victory, 207-12.
the Serbs to end their aggression and allow an international peacekeeping force to enter Kosovo.

President Clinton enumerated three objectives of this campaign: to “demonstrate the seriousness of NATO’s opposition to aggression,” to “deter President Milosevic from continuing and escalating his attacks on helpless civilians by imposing a price for those attacks,” and “if necessary, to damage Serbia’s capacity to wage war against Kosovo in the future by seriously diminishing its military capabilities.” The nature of these objectives made it clear there were no vital or even important US interests at stake, since there was nothing definitive, such as defeating the Serbian military forces and achieving a clear-cut victory, to be gained. Additionally, the idea that important US interests were at stake was undermined from the beginning by presidential assurances that no ground troops would be used, as well as by the overriding importance placed on preventing US casualties.


The Military Context

In the Persian Gulf, Saddam Hussein made a strategic mistake of epic proportions when he chose to challenge the US military to a conventional, combined arms battle. The US advantage in weaponry, training, competence, and morale was overwhelming. Additionally, the timing of the conflict, coming at the end of the Cold War but before any significant reductions in US forces, was such that the United States was able to use as much of its Cold War arsenal as it felt necessary. In the event, the United States alone deployed nearly 500,000 troops, 600 combat aircraft, and four carrier battle groups to the combat theater. Of these troops, a significant portion was mobilized National Guard and Reserve forces. The president activated 245,000 reservists, with approximately 206,000 of them eventually deployed to Southwest Asia. These forces were called up as units and as individual ready reservists in three waves, as the president used his authority to implement involuntary activation of Selected Reservists for 90 days, plus a 90-day extension. The war began with a 38-day air campaign (16 January-24 February 1991), which significantly degraded Iraqi capabilities and morale. The subsequent 100-hour land campaign (24-28 February) featured a broad

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24 Millett and Maslowski, Common Defense, 634-5.

sweeping hook around the right flank of the Iraqi positions that would have made George Patton proud.\textsuperscript{26}

As noted previously, the Clinton administration significantly limited the US effort in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Consequently, there was no military mobilization to speak of with any of these commitments. The US forces in Somalia comprised roughly half of the total UN force of about 25,000. These troops found themselves escorting UN relief missions and protecting supply depots, and when these actions brought them into conflict with the local warlords, fighting in urban terrain, culminating with the Mogadishu firefight described above.\textsuperscript{27}

The Bosnia operations comprised an escalating series of four, mostly airpower, commitments. The first of these, Operation Provide Promise (January 1992 to March 1996), was focused on delivering a UN peacekeeping force and humanitarian relief supplies to Sarajevo and other ethnic enclaves in Bosnia. The US contribution was limited to flying these airlift missions. The second, Operation Deny Flight (April 1993 to December 1995), was initially designed to enforce a UN-mandated no-fly zone over Bosnia and then expanded to include close air support and other attack missions against Serb ground forces. The third, Operation Deliberate Force, was a separate set of air attack missions from 29 August to 14 September 1995 against Serb military targets, intended to prevent attacks on UN-designated safe areas throughout Bosnia. Finally,


\textsuperscript{27} Millet and Maslowski, \textit{Common Defense}, 649.
Operation Joint Endeavor/Joint Guard (December 1995 to December 1998) involved the deployment of 20,000 NATO peacekeeping troops, primarily the US 1st Armored Division, to enforce the provisions of the Dayton Peace Accords and bring stability to the country.\textsuperscript{28}

In Kosovo, Operation Allied Force lasted 78 days, from 24 March to 10 June 1999, and was the largest combat operation in NATO history, entailing 38,000 air combat sorties. Initially focused on Serbian forces, military and political leadership, and command and control facilities, the target sets were ultimately expanded to include the civilian infrastructure of Serbia, such as electrical power, bridges, and rail lines. The air campaign was only marginally effective because of constraints on targeting designed to limit collateral damage and NATO casualties, as well as the effects of weather. But backed up by the threat of intervention with ground forces, it eventually forced Milosevic to give in to NATO’s demands, at which point a NATO peacekeeping force was deployed to Kosovo.\textsuperscript{29} After Milosevic acceded to NATO demands to withdraw from Kosovo, President Clinton called up 33,100 reservists for duty in southeast Europe for no more than nine months.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Martel, \textit{Victory}, 207-12.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 212-15. For an analysis of the difficulties involved in trying to achieve NATO/US objectives by means of a highly constrained air campaign, especially in Kosovo, see Alan Vick, et al, \textit{Aerospace Operations Against Elusive Ground Targets} (Santa Monica CA: RAND, 2001); for a broader and more in-depth analysis of the Kosovo air campaign see Benjamin S. Lambeth, \textit{NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment} (Santa Monica CA: RAND, 2001); and for the perspective of the NATO/US military commander see Wesley K. Clark, \textit{Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat} (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).

Industry and the Economy

None of the engagements during the 1990s required industrial or economic mobilization in the traditional sense. The brevity of the Gulf War and the state of military stockpiles immediately at the end of the Cold War precluded any need for an increase in spending on the military (as a percentage of GDP) for that conflict. Total US incremental costs for the war were an estimated $61 billion. Coalition partners committed almost $54 billion to offset these costs – roughly $47 billion in cash, with the remainder comprising “in-kind” payments of equipment, military material, and air- and sea-lift. The existing military-industrial complex easily absorbed the limited production increases required for deployment and sustainment of US military forces in the Gulf. Government depot repair facilities (for tanks and aircraft, for example) increased production by extending shifts, increasing overtime work, and temporarily hiring more employees. The services also used significant stocks of war reserve materiel.

The Somalia operations cost of almost $885 million through the end of FY 1993 was initially paid for by DOD using existing appropriations. Subsequently, Congress provided supplemental appropriations that covered most of this expense. Operations in Bosnia and Kosovo were initially funded through supplemental appropriations, but as

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31 For discussion of Gulf War financing, see Labonte, Financing Issues, 12-14 and DOD, Conduct of Persian Gulf War, 634-5. For more details on coalition contributions, see the entire section of the DOD report, Appendix P, “Responsibility Sharing,” 633-8.

32 The US Army Materiel Command let almost $4 billion in contracts while the Defense Logistics Agency let almost $5 billion more. In several cases, for example, desert uniform items, chemical protective suits, and tray-pack rations, the time required to achieve maximum production rates equaled or exceeded the entire length of the conflict. DOD, Appendix F, “Logistics Buildup and Sustainment,” Conduct of Persian Gulf War, 432-7.
the peacekeeping operations settled into a steady state, Congress directed the Clinton administration to include the costs in its regular defense appropriations requests. From 1992 to mid-1998, approximately $9.5 billion had been appropriated for support of military operations in Bosnia, with another $1.86 billion provided in a supplemental appropriation for FY 1999. The Department of Defense estimated $2 billion in costs for the war in Kosovo, plus another $1 billion for the US contribution to the peacekeeping force (KFOR) by 30 September 1999. DOD submitted a $5.5 billion supplemental request for the air campaign and humanitarian relief operations for FY1999. In mid-May of 1999, Congress approved $13 billion in supplemental defense appropriations, intended to cover the direct costs in Kosovo and other general readiness expenses. In sum, none of the conflicts of this decade required additional taxes or bond sales to the American public.


Creating Public Support

In mobilizing the public for the mission in the Persian Gulf, President Bush’s rhetoric shifted over time as he reacted to opinion polling. He initially explained US interests by emphasizing the importance of access to the oil reserves of the region, the danger of Saddam Hussein controlling too large a portion of those reserves, and the importance to the world economy of stability in the region. He also stressed broader issues of international norms and the need for civilized nations to take a stand against unprovoked aggression. He labeled the invasion of Kuwait as “without provocation or warning” and an “outrageous and brutal act of aggression.” By October and November, he was taking pains to emphasize that the stakes in Kuwait far exceeded concerns about economics or oil. He repeatedly hammered home the theme that standing up to Hussein was a matter of creating a “world order free from unlawful aggression, free from violence, free from plunder” and a choice between living in a world “governed by the rule of law or by the law of the jungle.” He also underscored the “strong moral underpinning” to the actions of the United Nations in standing up for the sovereignty of a nation and the fate of a people.36

In all these remarks, Bush focused on Saddam Hussein as the enemy and often emphasized that the United States had no quarrel with the Iraqi people. He also warned of Iraq’s military capabilities, describing its “enormous war machine” of over one million troops. He repeatedly portrayed the invasion of Kuwait as “rape,” and repeated

stories of pillage, plunder, and murder. In particular, he treated as fact accounts of “summary executions” and “routine torture” and stories of dialysis patients “ripped from their machines” and babies “thrown from incubators.” As noted above, he continually compared the invasion of Kuwait to the Nazis invasion of Poland. He reminded audiences that “Death’s Head regiments” of the SS followed the invasion forces, executing children for passing out leaflets, then related a story of Iraqi troops executing in front of their parents two Kuwaiti teenagers for passing out leaflets. When asked by journalists whether he was exaggerating in characterizing Saddam as another Hitler, Bush assured them he was not saying the events in Kuwait were worse than the Holocaust, but insisted the comparison with Nazis actions in Poland was more than valid. In fact, it became clear after the war that the claims of atrocities in Kuwait were exaggerated, with some of them planted by paid agents of the Kuwaiti government.

This rhetoric essentially precluded the possibility of a negotiated settlement with Iraq. Although Bush stated his desire for a peaceful solution, support for diplomatic


38 The “babies from incubators” story, as repeatedly conveyed by President Bush, was the most effective of the atrocity stories in creating public outrage and, hence, support for the war. It was also a fabrication – questioned by only a few perceptive journalists and other researchers at the time, but thoroughly debunked after the war. For a detailed unpacking and analysis of the story, see John R. MacArthur, Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the 1991 Gulf War (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 2004), 37-77.
negotiations, and willingness to allow time for economic sanctions to take effect, he also repeatedly emphasized that the actions of Saddam Hussein left no room for compromise. In his address announcing the beginning of combat operations, he asserted that every effort at a peaceful solution had failed and that five months of diplomatic efforts had failed to convince Hussein to withdraw his troops from Kuwait. He noted, further, that sanctions had thus far failed and there was no indication they would induce compliance on their own, and that, therefore, the coalition had no choice but to use military force.\(^{39}\)

This rhetoric was only marginally effective in mobilizing the public – especially with respect to influencing public opinion about the need for offensive operations to eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Over 75 percent of the public approved of the defensive deployment of US troops to the Gulf in August, with the percentage remaining consistently at 60-65 percent through the beginning of combat operations. In contrast, consistently just under 50 percent agreed the Gulf situation was worth going to war over, throughout the pre-war period. Regardless of whether they felt it was worth going to war over, the portion of the public that expected war to occur steadily increased, from 36-39 percent in August to 43 percent in October to 51 percent in November to 57 percent the first week of January 1991 and 66 percent the second week of January.\(^{40}\) Mueller argues that before the United States initiated combat operations, it is incorrect to assert that a majority of the public supported war (although there are variations in


\(^{40}\) These statistics are from Mueller, Tables 20, 34, 36, 164, 223; Figures 1, 4, Policy and Opinion, 198-9, 205-6, 269, 305, 376, 377.
outcomes depending on how the question is worded). In essence, the president did not mobilize the nation for war. Rather, “taking advantage of a somewhat permissive, and fatalistic, consensus, he simply started a war while the public (and Congress) watched.”

The data that more directly indicate public engagement support this conclusion. For example, there was considerable variability in the number who claimed to follow the Gulf news closely, from roughly 30-45 percent before the war, to 70 percent at the beginning of the air campaign, back down to 55 percent in the second week of February. After combat operations began, from four to eleven percent reported having cancelled plans for entertainment, parties, vacations, or business trips because of the war. Twenty-three percent said the football playoffs and Super Bowl should be postponed, while 68 percent said they should go on as planned. Only five percent had participated in a demonstration either for or against the war, while 49 percent had displayed a US flag and 51 percent had displayed a yellow ribbon. Throughout the buildup and subsequent combat, with one exception, less than one fourth of the public considered the Gulf the most important problem facing the United States.

The Bush administration and US military closely controlled the information emanating from the Gulf. This policy was an aspect of the “no more Vietnams” mentality that gripped the administration and military leaders, and an outgrowth of the

41 Mueller, Policy and Opinion, 125.

42 In a poll conducted 30 Jan-2 Feb 91, 37 percent of respondents considered the Gulf the most important problem. Mueller, Tables 45, 46, 50; Figure 3, Policy and Opinion, 211-13, 213-14, 216, 377; see also Gallup Brain, online archive of survey questions and results maintained by the Gallup Corporation, http://0-institution.gallup.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/home.aspx (accessed 24 May 2011).
perception that negative media reports during that conflict had undermined support for the war. In the Persian Gulf, the military established a media pool system that ensured it could easily control small numbers of reporters. Military escorts watched over interviews, and security reviews prior to transmission resulted in changes to more favorable wording that had nothing to do with security. The public not only was not concerned about these restrictions, but approved of them. 43

Television news producers had also learned the lessons of Vietnam. 44 Although they complained about the restrictions of the pool system, they were largely cooperative in conveying the government’s message. The networks were caught up in the national mood, recognizing the need to prove their patriotic bona fides as well as to serve up “feel good” lead-ins to advertising. Their coverage was dominated by images of the technical superiority of US forces; the expert military briefers, retired military officers, and think-tank pundits who enlightened reporters and viewers alike; the heroic, clean-cut volunteers of the US military; the enemy, who was evil in a way that Americans could never be; and images of the American flag. 45 Collectively, these images constituted a


44 Eighty-nine percent of the public indicated their main source of war news was television. Eight percent relied primarily on radio and two percent on newspapers. This poll was conducted 17-20 January 1990. See Gallup Brain.

45 On television news and these images, see Daniel Hallin, “TV’s Clean Little War,” in Foley and O’Malley, 489-94.
sanitized view of the war that emphasized the virtuous nature of US involvement, obscured its complexities, and downplayed both its human and material costs.

The nature of the media’s coverage – only one percent of stories between 8 August 1990 and 3 January 1991 focused on opposition to US actions— allowed the Bush administration essentially to ignore resistance to the war. There were several notable demonstrations against the war on 26 January 1991 in Washington DC, San Francisco, and other cities. The Park Service estimated 75,000 protestors in Washington, where speakers included the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY), and Molly Yard, leader of the National Organization for Women. Since Congress had already voted in support of the war (even though not by huge margins), opponents such as these could gain little traction.

While outright protests had little influence on administration decisions, Mueller shows that public opinion “importantly influenced” administration rhetoric and policy decisions both before and during the war. The tepid support for potential offensive operations caused Bush to shift rhetorical emphasis from the plight of Kuwaitis and the threat to oil supplies to Saddam Hussein as evil and the potential for Iraq to acquire nuclear weapons. Mueller debunks the argument that Bush mobilized and shaped public opinion into supporting a necessary war and points out that even after the shift in


47 Small, Appendix B, Covering Dissent, 172-3. Small claims there were many more than 75,000 protestors in Washington; organizers of the event claimed 250,000. He takes the media to task for treating the opposition as unimportant, thereby ensuring its unimportance. Carl Mirra agrees that war opposition was underreported, especially that within the military itself. See his “The Mutation of the Vietnam Syndrome: Underreported Resistance during the 1991 Persian Gulf War,” Peace & Change 36, no. 2 (April 2011): 262-84.
rhetoric there was no great groundswell of sentiment in favor of war. Rather, “Bush was at best able to keep [public opinion] from slipping away from him.”  

In contrast to the extensive rhetorical effort President Bush devoted to mobilizing support for the US commitment in the Persian Gulf, the commitment to Somalia, coming at the very end of his administration and of much smaller scale, garnered much less explanation. The day after the UN resolution passed, he addressed the nation, describing the situation in Somalia as tragic and the deployment as necessary to save lives and ease suffering. Acknowledging that the only American interests involved were humanitarian, he emphasized the theme of saving “thousands of innocents from death” and the obligation to save Somalia’s children. He described the political situation in Somalia as “anarchy.” He explained that the US commitment was not open-ended, that once its limited objectives of “[opening] the supply routes, to get the food moving” and creating a “secure environment in the hardest hit parts of Somalia” was achieved, the US would withdraw its troops and return the mission to regular UN peacekeeping forces.  

President Clinton, having inherited the situation from Bush, made no substantive comments on the Somalia commitment until 5 May when he welcomed home the troops who had been serving in UNITAF. The focus of his remarks was the success of UNITAF in alleviating the suffering of the Somalis and creating conditions allowing schools to reopen and crops to be planted. He noted that the significant US contingent


participating in the follow-on mission (UNISOM II) would take up the task of “rebuilding and creating a peaceful, self-sustaining, and democratic civil society.” He ended his remarks with his perspective on the US role after the Cold War, noting there were still threats, responsibilities, and interests to attend to, and that while the United States was not the world’s policeman, it was the world’s leader and must accept that role.\textsuperscript{50}

Initially, support for the humanitarian relief mission in Somalia was very high, with almost 75 percent of the public approving of President Bush’s deployment of US troops. Public support was buttressed by the “feel good” objective of relieving the suffering of the starving children they were seeing in television news reports,\textsuperscript{51} the assumption that there was a high likelihood of success with little risk of casualties, and bipartisan support in Congress. Under UNISOM II and with the expansion of the mission to nation building, that support started to erode significantly. The public began to see the mission as too ambitious, with a likelihood of getting bogged down and few prospects for ultimate success. Additionally, they had never considered important or vital US interests at stake, and therefore, concluded that whether measured in casualties or money, the costs of such an enterprise were liable to exceed anything the United


\textsuperscript{51}It is important to recognize, however, that assumptions about the so-called “CNN effect” whereby such images led to the administration’s decision to intervene are incorrect. See Piers Robinson, “Operation Restore Hope and the Illusion of a News Media Driven Intervention,” \textit{Political Studies} 49, no. 5 (December 2001): 941-56. Robinson shows that major media attention followed the intervention decision rather than preceding it, but the coverage did tend to support and reinforce that decision.
States was likely to accomplish. The firefight in Mogadishu resulted in some vocal sentiment for immediate withdrawal, but the percentage of the public supporting the Somalia mission had already dropped below half before it occurred. The firefight and resulting US casualties simply reinforced an existing trend. President Clinton cited the same justifications he had used regarding Somalia when he committed the United States to the NATO effort in Bosnia and Kosovo.

In trying to mobilize public support for intervention in the Balkans, Clinton focused on three main themes: appeals to “core American values,” emphasis on the national interests that were at stake, and the importance of affirming US leadership. Throughout the US involvement, he reiterated these themes. In May 1994, he told the country “we have an interest in continuing to serve as a beacon of strength and freedom and hope,” and while the United States no longer faced a Soviet threat, the “world is still a dangerous place.” A year and a half later he emphasized that “American leadership … is absolutely essential as a source of our strength at home and our success abroad. We must stand for democracy and freedom.” Later, addressing the need for action in Kosovo, he asserted that while there was “no overriding threat to our survival or our freedom,” the “United States has the opportunity and … the solemn responsibility to shape a more peaceful, prosperous, democratic world.” He further claimed that the conflict would spread, and then the cost and risk of stopping it would be far greater.


53 Larson and Savych, Public Support, 55.
With echoes of falling dominoes, he warned that continued conflict between Kosovo and Serbia “almost certainly will draw in Albania and Macedonia” and potentially affect Greece and Turkey, as well as reigniting tensions in Bosnia.  

Having observed the limits of intervention in Somalia, the American public remained largely unmoved by the arguments for intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo. The average level of support for sending or keeping US troops in Bosnia ranged from 40 to 49 percent, and was never above half, while the level of disapproval at times surged above 50 percent. Public support for US involvement in Kosovo was higher than for Bosnia, but still highly variable, and there was consistent and substantially higher support for air strikes and peacekeeping operations than for ground combat or peace enforcement. In February 1999, 54 percent approved of US troops participating in a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, while only 43 percent supported air strikes as an

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56 Larson and Savych, Public Support, 77-9. They again point out the polling results are sensitive to question wording, especially with regard to the types of forces that would be used, how they would be used, and inferences or statements about the relative danger they would encounter.
A month later, 46 percent favored US missile or air strikes as part of NATO action, 58 percent felt the United States had a moral obligation to keep the peace in Kosovo, and 36 percent claimed to be paying attention to the issue (with 58 percent of those supporting the air strike option). One day after President Clinton’s speech announcing the beginning of NATO air strikes, 49 percent were satisfied with his explanation of the reasons for US action and 64 percent agreed the United States had a moral obligation to protect ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. At the same time, only 43 percent agreed the United States had national interests justifying its involvement, and nearly two-thirds opposed sending ground troops if the air strikes failed. Two weeks later the portion approving of US participation in the air campaign had grown from 50 to 61 percent, and for the first time, over half (52 percent) supported the possibility of using US ground troops. By the end of May, however, support for participation in the air campaign was down to 49 percent (reflecting the perceived lack of efficacy of the air strikes), support for the possible use of ground troops had returned to 40 percent, and 82

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percent of respondents favored resolution of the situation through diplomatic negotiations while suspending the air strikes. Nevertheless, only 25 percent were in favor of a complete end to military operations with no further effort to help the Kosovar refugees.\footnote{Frank Newport, “Support for U.S. Kosovo Involvement Drops,” \textit{Gallup News Service}, 26 May 1999, \textit{Gallup Brain} archive, http://0-institution.gallup.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/poll/3826/Support-US-Kosovo-Involvement-Drops.aspx (accessed 8 June 2011).}

Together, these examples illustrate that the process of public mobilization during this decade continued trends first seen during the Cold War. As conflicts became more limited in time or the number of troops committed, or both, the public was less engaged. That is, they were not actually required to do anything to support the war, and they were more isolated from the professionalized, all-volunteer military force in which only a very small percentage of the population served. To the extent that the government had to “pay attention” to public mobilization, it was a matter of trying to measure and influence public opinion rather than mobilizing the nation.

\textit{Conclusion}

Looking back on 1990s from the vantage point of the post-9/11 world, one is tempted to dismiss that short period as an almost irrelevant interlude between two great crusades. To succumb to that temptation when considering the concept of mobilization would be an error. The form of US military commitments during the decade resulted in significantly changed characteristics of mobilization and reinforced a number of trends begun during the Cold War, which together have had a profound influence on what passes for mobilization for the on-going efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the larger “war on terror.”
The first of these characteristics was a rekindling of the idealist justification for US military commitments. Many observers saw the sudden end to the Cold War as a validation of the idealist narrative. With no existential or even direct threat to the United States, the country was free to follow its “better nature” and extend its values and way of life around the world while protecting those who were unable to protect themselves. The rhetoric of mobilization (to the extent that there was a form of mobilization for these commitments) was focused on this narrative, as seen with President Bush’s emphasis during the Persian Gulf War on maintaining a lawful world order as well as President Clinton’s description of the US role in shaping a democratic and prosperous world.

At the same time, the importance placed on limiting US casualties during these conflicts raises questions about how committed the nation was to its idealist values. Prior to and during combat operations in the Persian Gulf, the Bush administration remained deeply concerned about what level of casualties the public was willing to accept, and fear of higher casualties was an important consideration in halting offensive operations. By the time of the Balkans intervention, protecting US forces had a higher priority than the actual humanitarian mission of protecting Bosnian Muslims and Kosovar Albanians. This emphasis on limiting costs, coupled with the one-sided nature of these conflicts, also raises important moral issues. For the vast majority of the nation, the idealist values espoused by Presidents Bush and Clinton were purely rhetorical and even unreal to the degree that that majority was never asked to risk or to contribute.

Mueller argues that the administration misread public sentiment when allowing fear of increased US casualties to influence the decision to end the fighting. He also regards US leaders as overly sensitive to potential concerns about excessive Iraqi casualties (the so-called “highway of death”), pointing out there is no actual data showing such public concern and labeling the US public as “quite insensitive” to the issue of Iraqi casualties. See his Policy and Opinion, 121-3, 135.
something tangible to ensure those values would prevail. The high-sounding language of sacrifice and human rights had little substance beneath the surface sentiments.\textsuperscript{63}

The second important characteristic of mobilization established during this decade was the validation of the US military as a force for good and representative of the best characteristics of the American people, while at the same time the actual fighting was relegated to such a small portion of the people that war became something of a “spectator sport.” The Persian Gulf conflict was a key in this regard as Operation Desert Storm was portrayed to the public as a textbook campaign, with images of bombs precisely on the targeting crosshairs, tank columns sweeping majestically across the desert, Iraqis surrendering in droves, and Kuwaitis weeping in gratitude. The all-volunteer force performed extraordinarily well, and the combination of overwhelming US military competence with casualty numbers far below what had been anticipated made for a “feel good” victory.

Mueller suggests that, in fact, “one appeal of the war for [at least] some Americans was the sheer aesthetic pleasure they received from being on the side that thoroughly, elegantly, and cheaply kicked the contemptible enemy’s butt.” He sees this aesthetic pleasure as at least partially a result of national leaders and media commentators continually framing the war as “sport.” He points out that media reports at the time were replete with sports metaphors, especially football, and that the sports comparisons contained one particularly telling parallel – the “breathless anticipation” of

\textsuperscript{63} Ignatieff, \textit{Virtual War}, 191, 163.
the all-consuming “Big Game” culminating in “violent consummation;” “But once it is over, even the most ardent fans, … move on to other concerns and leave it all behind.”64

The subsequent commitments in Somalia and the Balkans were similarly a matter of spectator sport for the American public. The citizenry could look at these conflicts as important in an abstract way, but not personally to them. These commitments did not demand the “physical involvement or moral attention” that was typical of the national wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A significant consequence of this transition to conflict as an abstraction observed from afar is to divest citizens of their power to give consent and to ensure that, in essence, they are demobilized, rather than mobilized.65

The third characteristic of mobilization highlighted by this decade of conflicts is the notion that the nation can go to war or otherwise commit its military forces with no significant impact on the economy, industry, or civilian consumption. Even the deployment of 500,000 troops and their equipment to the Gulf – by any measure a huge effort – did not require any semblance of industrial mobilization. In comparison to President Johnson, who was criticized for not putting the economy on a war footing, the 1990s saw an expectation that no trade-offs between guns and butter need be made. Consequently, the idea of economic sacrifice, in decline since the Cold War, was thoroughly disassociated from the waging of war.66


65 Ignatieff, Virtual War, 3-5, 184.

66 On this point, see Ibid., 191.
The fourth characteristic, a continuation of the trend begun with Korea and Vietnam, is the process by which presidents take the nation to war or otherwise commit the military to action with reduced or merely superficial public debate and Congressional influence. The War Powers Act, passed after Vietnam to curb presidential power in this regard, has proven to be ineffectual, with every president since asserting it is an infringement on his constitutional power. Additionally, in many cases it appears that Congress is only too happy to allow the president to take responsibility for such commitments and any negative consequences that inhere to them.

In the case of the Gulf War, the data show the US public was interested in and knowledgeable of the issues, and there was, indeed, a public and Congressional debate. Yet, President Bush unilaterally made the decisions to deploy troops initially to defend Saudi Arabia and, more importantly, to increase the deployed numbers so as to have an offensive capability. As discussed above, he was in large part able to implement the decision to take offensive action without convincing a majority of the public or significant portion of the Congress that such action was necessary. Only after the war began were the public, Congress, and media transformed into “cheering, uncritical observers.” 67 The unilateral nature of presidential decision-making was even more pronounced in the cases of Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and absent a significant event as forcing mechanism, such as the Mogadishu firefight, the commitments were apt to drag on regardless of public sentiment. In Bosnia, for example, two and a half years of

polling data consistently indicated the public wanted US troops pulled out, but Clinton administration policies remained at odds with this expression of popular will.\textsuperscript{68}

Bacevich has described such circumstances as resulting from a “postliberal relationship” that insulates policy decisions and military action from public involvement. The primary result of this relationship is to “decouple” the people from military affairs.\textsuperscript{69} The constitutional requirement to declare war, consequently, has become a virtual process of giving consent to “use force.” The use of polls and focus groups to bypass the formal institutions of democracy (i.e., the Congress) undercuts meaningful, formal debate. The public is consulted, but only insofar as government leaders use polling results to craft a message that will generate public support.\textsuperscript{70}

This process of decoupling, which began during the Cold War, has resulted in a separation of public opinion from public mobilization. If the essence of mobilization is the impetus to act, public mobilization for war is a matter of the direct engagement of the people in achieving the goals of the nation in conflict. The US military commitments of the 1990s arguably required the least amount of engagement of the American people in the nation’s history. The less the public is asked to do and the more they are asked merely to “support” (or are maneuvered into acquiescing to) military commitments, the more ephemeral the concept of public mobilization becomes. With nothing to ask of the


\textsuperscript{69} Bacevich, “Neglected Trinity,” 179.

\textsuperscript{70} Ignatieff, \textit{Virtual War}, 176-7, 180.
public, the measuring and manipulating of public opinion becomes an end in itself, rather than being an indicator of public mobilization.

Collectively, these characteristics led in the 1990s to a divergence of both the ends and means of conflict from the need for mobilization. Broadly stated, vague but idealistic objectives (saving starving children, preventing atrocities, supporting democracy), coupled to a professionalized military force comprising a tiny portion of the population, allowed for maximum flexibility in pursuing those objectives. Given that war no longer reached into the civilian economy and mobilized everything in its path, these factors ensured that, in the extreme, conflict could take place without notice from nearly everyone in the population or the majority of the government. (An example of this phenomenon during the 1990s was the enforcement of the no-fly zones over Iraq. American pilots were flying combat missions, dropping bombs over the course of years, with the public hardly even aware, Congress raising no objections, and minimal media coverage.) With war no longer a struggle for national survival, it no longer required the mobilization of society and the economy. While the public was not unmindful of casualties or the other costs of the nation’s military commitments, such interest that it collectively displayed in these issues was not a matter of mobilization. As the twenty-first century dawned and the attack by Al Qaeda made it clear the United States faced a much more important threat than those that drove its military commitments of the 1990s, the effort to mobilize to face that threat remained largely a virtual affair.

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71 Bacevich, “Neglected Trinity,” 178; Ignatieff, Virtual War, 180-1.

72 Bacevich, “Neglected Trinity,” 180-1; Ignatieff, Virtual War, 190.
CHAPTER 6
THE WAR ON TERROR AND CURRENT-DAY MOBILIZATION

As the towers of the World Trade Center in New York City crashed to earth and columns of black smoke rose above the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania, people across the country made an almost instinctual comparison to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Pundits and commentators proclaimed 11 September 2001 as the “day the world changed,” indicating the United States now faced a new and deadly enemy. President George W. Bush and other members of his administration led the charge in framing the attack in these apocalyptic tones. This modern-day equivalent of Pearl Harbor coupled to a purportedly existential threat might have signaled a return to a World War II style mobilization, or at least a major nationwide effort of some sort, but it did not. Instead, the minimalist, “virtual” mobilization processes that held sway in the 1990s remained the accepted practice.

Threat and Objectives

The nineteen terrorists who hijacked four airliners were members of the radical Islamic organization Al Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden. Using the four jets as weapons, they killed nearly 3,000 people.¹ Yet, this “new” threat did not suddenly appear with this attack. Al Qaeda had previously struck US embassies in East Africa (1998) and had attacked the USS Cole in Yemen (October 2000) using suicide bombers in a small boat. The Central Intelligence Agency and other elements of the US government had been stalking bin Laden for over ten years.

¹ The exact total was 2,977; 2,753 in New York City, 184 at the Pentagon, and 40 in Pennsylvania. Washington Post (28 August 2011), E1.
After 11 September, President Bush characterized the threat posed by Al Qaeda and terrorism in existential terms. On 12 September, he described the attack as an act of war and said, “This enemy attacked not just our people but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world.” Echoing the expansive, idealist rhetoric of twentieth century wartime presidents, he characterized the US task as a “responsibility to history” to “rid the world of evil.” On numerous occasions he made clear he did not see the US response as focused just on Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, emphasizing repeatedly that “our mission is to battle terrorism,” writ large. In his address to the nation on 20 September, he provided his complete perspective on the threat and the nation’s necessary response. With a direct comparison to Pearl Harbor and an echo of Roosevelt’s 8 December 1941 address, President Bush announced, “On September 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country” and warned that Al Qaeda’s goal was to “[remake] the world and [impose] its radical beliefs on people everywhere.” He described “thousands” of Al Qaeda terrorists training, plotting, hiding, and waiting to strike around the world and assured the nation, “we will direct every resource at our command … to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network.”

The president’s rhetoric committed the nation to do “whatever it takes” to achieve victory over its terrorist enemies. He emphasized that success would require an extended campaign rather than a single battle, and the American people would have to

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be patient. The US military was dispatched to Afghanistan, and a year and a half later to Iraq. Congressional votes of support served as proxies for declaring war. Despite his depiction of the threat as existential and the effort as unlimited, he did nothing to put the entire country on a war footing.

**The Military Context**

The president’s decision to send ground forces to combat Al Qaeda and its Taliban protectors in Afghanistan presented the US military with significant operational and, especially, logistical difficulties. He and his advisors considered a limited response using cruise missile strikes or bombers inadequate given the gravity of the terrorist attack. Nonetheless, any thought of mounting a traditional armor-heavy, combined arms assault was undercut by the time it would take to assemble and transport such forces, the difficulty, both physically and diplomatically, of access to the land-locked country, and the lesson of what happened to the Soviets when they sent such a force to Afghanistan.

Consequently, the Bush administration elected to take advantage of a long-standing CIA presence in Afghanistan and an existing anti-Taliban tribal rebellion to limit the number of “boots on the ground” – the primary component of which, at least initially, would be special operations forces. The special operations troops and CIA paramilitary units brought high-tech communications and target designators for precision air strikes to the Afghan rebel fighters. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and

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General Tommy Franks, commander of US Central Command, believed speed of operations could substitute for numbers. The combination of American technical expertise with Afghan rebels led to unexpectedly rapid progress, and these early operational successes seemingly validated their view.  

This emphasis on parsimony, however, would lead to problems. The limited numbers of US troops made it impossible to establish effective, consistent control over the countryside. Taliban and Al Qaeda forces would retreat in the face of US pressure but reoccupy remote areas when the US forces moved to their next target locations. The reliance on innovation with light, fast forces became even more problematic when Secretary Rumsfeld and General Franks elected, despite a chorus of warnings, to apply it to the invasion of Iraq. Rumsfeld was convinced, based on the Afghanistan experience, that the initial CENTCOM plan calling for large numbers of mechanized forces to make the attack was overkill. As he expected, the stripped-down forces that conducted the invasion made short work of the Iraqi conventional forces as they raced to Baghdad, but poor decision-making and lack of planning for post-conflict stabilization of the country ensured this operational success would be overshadowed by the chaos that followed.

Neither military nor civilian leaders were prepared for the breakdown of Iraqi society, the factional fighting that amounted to a nascent civil war, and the rapid

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5 Rumsfeld, Known, 377, 398, 405-6; Tommy Franks, with Malcolm McConnell, American Soldier (New York: Regan Books/Harper-Collins, 2004), 271, 306-7. The innovative combination of high- and low-tech approaches is exemplified by the now iconic picture of a bearded special forces soldier in Afghan dress on horseback calling in air strikes from B-52s dropping GPS-guided munitions.


development of a highly effective insurgency aimed at US forces and the US-supported Iraqi administration. Except for small specialist communities, the US military had discarded the study of irregular warfare and counterinsurgency after the defeat in Vietnam. Military leaders, as well as civilians like Secretary Rumsfeld, were reluctant even to label the growing number of Iraqi attacks an insurgency. Once the fact of the matter became irrefutable, it took years to relearn the tactics of counterinsurgency, and after the United States embraced such a campaign in Iraq and then Afghanistan, it ensured itself a long-term, expensive commitment in both countries.\(^8\)

This long-term commitment, in turn, made it painfully evident how far the United States had strayed from an effective concept of military mobilization. The transition to a counterinsurgency mission stressed US ground forces, especially the Army, almost to the breaking point because the numbers available were too small to prosecute the campaigns in both Afghanistan and Iraq while providing adequate time for rest, refit, and retraining between deployments. Congress authorized end-strength increases for the Army and Marine Corps, but by 2005, both services were having difficulty meeting recruiting goals. In response, the Army lowered recruiting standards and raised age limits.\(^9\)


The military services used several measures to bolster the number of troops available. Provisions in service members’ contracts for involuntary extension of enlistments and delays in retirement actions – called “Stop Loss” – were implemented. They extended deployed tour lengths and curtailed periods at home station. They converted non-combat jobs to civilian positions so active duty members could be concentrated in combat arms and combat support positions. Members in combat specialties with low demand in counterinsurgency operations, like artillery, were retrained as infantry or truck drivers.  

Additionally, the Air Force and Navy were levied quotas for volunteers to serve as drivers or convoy guards. The Army also initiated a program in 2005 called “Operation Blue to Green” to take advantage of Air Force and Navy force reductions and entice individuals leaving those two services into enlisting.  

These measures were mere band-aids.

The most significant increase in troops available for the missions in Afghanistan and Iraq came from the activation of reserve forces and the vastly increased use of civilian contractors in the combat zones. The call-up of large numbers of reservists has been crucial to relieving the deployment stress on the active forces, but the extended use of the reserve components has also had a deleterious effect on their other traditional mission of support to civil authorities in the United States. During Hurricane Katrina, for example, 3,000 Louisiana and 4,000 Mississippi National Guard members were deployed to Iraq and unavailable to respond to that disaster. In another case, the Kansas

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10 On these measures, see Lewis, American Culture of War, 443.

National Guard had between fifty and sixty percent of its heavy equipment and vehicles in Iraq in 2007 when a tornado struck Greensburg. Consequently, they were unable to reach victims as quickly as necessary, and the lack of heavy equipment hindered the search for survivors.\textsuperscript{12}

Nevertheless, the commitment of reserve forces to Afghanistan and Iraq has been essential. The Department of Defense reports that over 800,000 reserve component personnel have been activated since 9/11, with an average of at least 90,000 on active duty annually since 2003.\textsuperscript{13} Even with the reserve contribution, the stress on US ground forces rose to an unsustainable level at the height of the Iraqi insurgency.\textsuperscript{14} These stresses would have been even greater without the extensive use of civilian contractors.


\textsuperscript{13} DOD, Reserve Affairs, \url{www.ra.defense.gov/mobilization} (accessed 25 August 2011); DOD, Executive Summary & Main Report, \textit{Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserve Component}, Vol. 1 (Washington DC: Offices of the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, 5 April 2011), 23-4, 58. The accounting of reservists varies, even among defense sources. The Army has multiple tracking systems for reserve component mobilization that do not use interchangeable data or criteria for determining the status of individuals within units. In March 2005, for example, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service indicated 82,760 Army National Guard members called to active duty (on the 15th), while Department of the Army data indicated 108,724 on active duty (on the 18th). For details on this problem and its consequences, see Dennis P. Chapman, “Reserve Component Mobilization: Improving Accountability, Effectiveness, and Efficiency,” \textit{Military Review} 86, no. 3 (May-June 2006), 90-6.

Contractors in one form or another have been used throughout history to augment military forces, but the nature of the nation-building missions in Afghanistan and Iraq and the inadequate numbers of military troops has led to a dramatic increase in the number of private contractors employed by the US government. The firms themselves are primarily American or British, but most of the individuals they employ are host-country nationals or third-country nationals from such far-flung places as South Africa, Chile, Fiji, and Nepal. The contractors perform a wide variety of functions: logistical support (which has become commonplace), intelligence tasks, interpreters, training indigenous forces, and more controversially, interrogators and security guards.

Their presence has become so ubiquitous that the Defense Science Board has dubbed them the “fifth force provider,” and the numbers involved would seem to warrant the label. The number of contractors in Afghanistan was higher than the number of uniformed military from September 2007 until June 2010 and reached 69 percent of the DOD workforce in that country in December 2008, the highest proportion recorded in any US war. As of March 2011, there were 90,339 DOD contractors and 99,800 military troops in Afghanistan. The statistics for Iraq are similar, with approximately 64,000 contractors comprising 58 percent of the DOD workforce in country, compared to 46,000 military troops. While the number of both troops and direct support

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contractors has declined in tandem as the United States reduced its presence, the number of private security contractors increased by 14 percent.\footnote{17}

The magnitude of contractor involvement, the haste with which contracts were let (especially early in the conflicts), and a lack of oversight have led inevitably to fraud and waste. The DOD did not systematically gather data on contractors until the second half of 2007, and even then, admitted to the GAO that the information was of questionable reliability.\footnote{18} The DOD principal deputy inspector general testified to 29 audits regarding “overall accountability of wartime expenditures” and 90 IG investigations “related to … war profiteering, contract fraud, and contract corruption” in progress at that time.\footnote{19} The situation improved little in the ensuing four years. A more recent Congressionally-mandated investigation begins, “At least $31 billion, and possibly as much as $60 billion, has been lost to contract waste and fraud in America’s contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Much more will turn into waste as attention to continuing operations wanes, as U.S. support for projects and programs in Iraq and Afghanistan declines, and as those efforts are revealed as unsustainable.” The report notes that contractors have become the “default option” because so many federal agencies lack in-house capabilities for a number of mission-critical functions. Neither


\footnote{18} Schwartz and Swain, DOD Contractors, 4-5.

do these agencies have adequate in-house capabilities and processes to manage the greatly increased contracted activities.  

In addition to illegal and unethical activities, there are other potential problems associated with the use of contractors – the most significant of which are those resulting from contractors engaged in security functions.  The mix of armed civilian security guards with insurgents, US military forces, and Iraqi civilians initially proved lethal to both guards and civilians. There was widespread lack of coordination and understanding between US forces and private security providers, leading in some instances to the military firing on contractors. The military services also have concerns that the much higher pay offered by these firms is siphoning troops from the active duty force.  The potential for security guards to find themselves in active combat situations, with accompanying ramifications for their status under the Geneva Conventions and their adherence to the rules of engagement and laws of armed conflict, are obvious. There is clearly a “slippery slope” created, aptly illustrated by at least one documented instance

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20 Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, executive summary to Transforming Wartime Contracting: Controlling Costs, Reducing Risks, Final Report to Congress (August 2011), 1, 2, www.wartimecontracting.gov (accessed 16 September 2011). This study was conducted by a bipartisan legislative commission created by the FY2008 National Defense Authorization Act to study contracting processes of federal agencies in Afghanistan and Iraq. The full report, two interim reports, and five special reports are available at the web site.

21 According to Schwartz and Swain, DOD Contractors, 22, over the course of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the number of DOD contractors providing private security has averaged roughly 10 to 20 percent of the total.

where a private security contractor has been deliberately involved in what are normally regarded as “inherently governmental” combat missions.\textsuperscript{23}

The use of contractors in the war zones not only leads to the blurring of control over the use of violence and obscuring of monetary costs, it also obscures the costs in casualties. The final report of the Congressional Commission on Wartime Contracting observed that “significant contractor deaths and injuries have largely remained uncounted and unpublicized.” There has been “no definitive accounting,” and the best data available enumerates only fatalities. From March 2003 through July 2011, there were 1,667 US military fatalities and 887 contractor fatalities reported in Afghanistan. Over the same period in Iraq, there were 4,464 US military fatalities and 1,542 contractor fatalities. The report’s authors assert that “contractor deaths are undoubtedly higher than the reported total,” and they believe “many” deaths of foreign contract employees are not reported.\textsuperscript{24} It is telling that this discussion focuses entirely on fatalities; there is no attempt to enumerate the number of contractor personnel wounded or otherwise injured while deployed.

The use of private contractors, whether engaged in security missions or other tasks, does have some advantages, but these are offset by the dangers and disadvantages. On the positive side, these firms provide a mechanism for coping with a complex

\textsuperscript{23} Security guards from Blackwater Worldwide (subsequently renamed Xe Services) were originally contracted to provide static security at CIA posts, but their tasks were progressively expanded to the point of providing perimeter security during CIA raids, often conducted jointly with military special operations troops, which inevitably evolved into at least occasional participation in the actual missions. For details on the Blackwater involvement, see James Risen and Mark Mazzetti, “Blackwater Guards Tied to Secret Raids by CIA,” \textit{New York Times}, 11 December 2009, A1, \url{http://0-proquest.umi.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/pqddlink?did=1918998681&sid=5&Fmt=3&clientId=58117&RQT=309&VName=PQD} (accessed 22 August 2011).

\textsuperscript{24} Commission on Wartime Contracting, \textit{Transforming Wartime Contracting}, 30-1.
security environment while keeping the uniformed military to a manageable size. In particular, contracting for base support functions such as housing, meals, and laundry can be economically efficient, assuming the contracts are let competitively and monitored adequately. Contractors can also play an important role in the rapid integration of new capabilities and technology. On the negative side, the use of these firms undermines the institutional control of violence that is supposed to be the purview of the state and, more importantly, the oversight processes that are the hallmark of a democracy.25

Industry and the Economy

As had become the standard practice, the Bush administration relied on the extant production of the military-industrial complex to supply the needs of the war on terror. Still, the attack of 9/11 reinforced the importance of the defense industrial base and led to major spending increases. The defense budget more than doubled in ten years, with national security spending reaching 50 percent of discretionary spending and roughly equal to the military spending of all other nations.26

The requirements for fighting in two theaters plus those for homeland security resulted in military contracts totaling over $400 billion – the highest levels since World War II. Despite these vast sums earmarked for the war effort, troops in combat experienced equipment shortages, including “medium machine guns, body armor,


armored troop transports, and night vision goggles.” The Army director of aviation, Brigadier General Stephen Mundt, asserted that “industry is not on a war footing,” noting that it took two years from the time a helicopter was lost until a replacement reached the theater of operations. Another Army officer, Major General Paul Eaton charged that such shortages were a “direct result of not adequately applying our nation’s resources in supporting our troops.”

Neither government nor military leaders moved quickly to change the priorities. The Government Accountability Office found that the DOD processes to address urgent war fighting needs were fragmented and overlapping, with few controls and no centralized oversight, leading to duplication of effort and extended timelines in responding to requests from the field. While the DOD has recognized the problem and made improvements, there is still work to be done.

There were also instances of profiteering, waste, and fraud among defense contractors. For example, an Army inspector general investigation found that the Boeing Company had overcharged for Apache and Chinook helicopter parts by $13 million. The inspector general also found that after signing a contract with the Army, the company would renegotiate with its suppliers and subcontractors for lower prices, but failed to pass the savings to the government. Investigators found that Halliburton, holder of $6 billion in logistics contracts, grossly overcharged for services on multiple

27 Kitfield, “For the Army,” 29.


occasions. A 2004 Pentagon audit found bills for thousands of meals that were never
served, charges of $100 to do a single bag of laundry, a $27 million claim for
transporting petroleum purchased in Kuwait for $82,000, and $1.8 billion in unsupported
costs. A summer 2005 audit found $422 million in unsupported and $1.03 billion in
questioned costs.\(^{30}\)

In the meantime, other major defense firms focused on maintaining existing
production and fighting any initiative by government leaders to prioritize spending or
choose cutbacks in some programs to finance others more important to the war. A prime
example of this mindset was Lockheed Martin’s campaign to “save” the F-22 Raptor
fighter jet production program – made necessary because of a DOD initiative to cap
production at 187 planes, while the USAF and Lockheed wanted twice as many. This,
despite that fact that with two wars on-going, the Air Force had not deployed the plane
for combat. Lockheed used all the formidable lobbying tools at its command. A
concerted effort aimed at Congress resulted in 244 members signing a “save the Raptor”
letter sent to the president. Twelve governors and the president of the International
Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers sent similar letters. The focus of
these letters was jobs and the “economic impact” of the funding decision.\(^{31}\) In the event,
the Air Force and Lockheed lost the argument, but the fact that Lockheed is also a prime

Contracting in the Post-9/11 Period,” Brown University Watson Institute for International Studies, Costs

\(^{31}\) Hartung, \textit{Prophets of War}, 2-3.
contractor for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program undoubtedly assuaged bruised egos and wounded bottom lines.

Defense contractors are not the only ones who view their contributions as more a matter of the domestic economy than of national defense. When Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced plans to disestablish the Joint Forces Command and close its headquarters at Norfolk, the Virginia congressional delegation immediately protested. In a joint letter to Secretary Gates, they cited “substantial negative consequences … including … erosion of our military’s joint war fighting capabilities, the dismissal of thousands of highly skilled civilian federal employees and defense contractors, and significant adverse economic impact in the Hampton Roads region.” 32 Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn testifying before a Senate hearing on the topic insisted there would be no negative military impact and that the closure was a necessary cost-savings measure. In response, Senator James Webb (D-VA) warned his fellow senators that such closures could happen in their states, too, emphasizing that “we have no real information … that allows us to quantify the possible effects of this proposal in such areas as fiscal and local economic implications.” 33 President Obama ultimately approved the plan to disestablish Joint Forces Command, but accepted a compromise

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32 Bill Bartel, “VA Delegation Challenges Gates,” Virginian-Pilot, 14 August 2010, B3, http://0-www.lexisnexis.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/hottopics/inacademic (accessed 27 August 2011). Signatories to the letter were Senators James Webb and Mark Warner (both D-VA) and representatives Randy Forbes (R-Chesapeake), Glenn Nye (D-Virginia Beach), Bobby Scott (D-Newport News), and Rob Wittman (R-Westmoreland County).

33 Lynn pointed out that when established in 2000, the command employed 2,100 people and had a budget of $300 million. By 2010, the budget was $1 billion, and there were 6,000 employees, but there had been “no significant expansion of mission or responsibility.” Bill Bartel, “JFCOM Finds Few Friends,” Virginian-Pilot, 29 September 2010, A1, http://0-www.lexisnexis.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/hottopics/inacademic (accessed 27 August 2011).
proposal to retain about half of its functions (reassigned to other organizations) in the Norfolk area. These and similar efforts to control defense costs have come only recently. Throughout the Bush administration, there was far more emphasis on defense “at any cost,” and this mindset carried over into decisions regarding financing the war.

President Bush began his administration in an enviable budgetary position. In January 2001, the federal budget was balanced, and the Congressional Budget Office projected surpluses over the following ten years sufficient to pay off the national debt. By 11 September, reduced revenues resulting from the June 2001 tax cuts and an economic slowdown, coupled to passage of a budget that significantly increased farm subsidies and added the Medicare prescription drug benefit, had eliminated that projected surplus of $3.1 trillion. Faced with financing the military response to the attack and then the war in Iraq, President Bush increased spending for defense needs as well as lower priority domestic programs while continuing to cut taxes. When asked about this policy, the president denied there was any downside and labeled the idea that a tax increase might be required to finance the war an “absurd notion.” Then House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX) agreed with the president’s view. Speaking at a


meeting of America’s Community Bankers, he said, “Nothing is more important in the face of a war than cutting taxes.”

The administration also consistently underestimated costs, especially when responding to Congressional queries before the war in Iraq. There was no fiscal plan for financing that conflict, and discretionary spending for non-security programs (mostly farm subsidies, education, and transportation) increased from 2001 to 2004 at a greater rate than President Johnson’s increases for his Great Society programs during the Vietnam War. Secretary of the Treasury John Snow promised a journalist that the “cost of the war will be small. We can afford [it], and we’ll put it behind us.” Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz assured Congress that oil revenues from Iraq would be sufficient to finance its own reconstruction and charged that those who warned of higher costs did not know what they were talking about. Andrew Natsios, director of the US Agency for International Development, on the ABC News program Nightline, repeatedly asserted to interviewer Ted Koppel that the cost to the United States for rebuilding Iraq would be no more than $1.7 billion.

Assumptions about Iraq’s ability to contribute to its own rebuilding were also overly optimistic. Budget director Mitch Daniels reported that Iraq would not require “sustained aid.” However, RAND analyst and former assistant secretary of state James

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39 Hormats, Price of Liberty, 271.


41 Ricks, Fiasco, 98, 109.
Dobbins argued at the time that Iraqi oil production would not create enough revenue even to begin to finance reconstruction.\(^{42}\) A pre-war Pentagon analysis pointed out that decades of UN sanctions had caused facilities to deteriorate and limited Iraq’s production capacity to the point that extensive rebuilding would be necessary before production could come close to generating enough revenue.\(^{43}\) Nevertheless, the administration insisted its projections were more accurate.

As the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq settled into protracted nation-building and counterinsurgency campaigns, US defense spending skyrocketed, increasing for thirteen consecutive years – from $432 billion in FY2001 to $725 billion in FY2011 – with the post-9/11 increase financed entirely through deficit spending.\(^{44}\) Despite assuring Congress he would address defense requirements through normal budgeting processes, President Bush consistently sought supplemental appropriations in garnering this funding. Such supplemental appropriations, which by law are limited to “emergency” requirements, obscure costs and undermine congressional oversight because standards of justification and spending caps are bypassed.\(^{45}\) Actual costs of the war were veiled further when lower priority and even non-defense programs were

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\(^{43}\) Hormats, *Price of Liberty*, 264.


\(^{45}\) Stiglitz and Bilmes, *Three Trillion Dollar War*, 21-4. For the 17 Oct 2001 “President’s Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representative on the Emergency Appropriations Act” see their Appendix, 207-9. The criteria for emergency supplemental appropriations are specified in Title IX, Sec. 9011 of PL 108-287, see 246n54. Between 2001 and 2007, the money for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq was appropriated in 25 separate bills, 247n1.
included in these supposedly emergency supplemental requests.\footnote{Hormats, \textit{Price of Liberty}, 266-7.} While it was not unusual in the past for a president to seek supplemental appropriations at the beginning of a war, in the majority of cases, the funding was shifted to the normal appropriations process, sometimes at the direction of Congress and sometimes at the administration’s initiative.\footnote{Stephen Daggett, \textit{Military Operations: Precedents for Funding Contingency Operations in Regular or in Supplemental Appropriations Bills}, RS22455 (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 13 June 2006), \url{http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22455.pdf} (accessed 22 August 2011). This report is a summary of the use of supplemental funding in major conflicts and military deployments from the Korean War forward. The author points out that during the Vietnam War, from 1965-68 President Johnson included war funding in his regular budget requests, but then would ask for additional supplemental funds on the grounds of “unforeseen” expenses.}

All told, the costs of the war coupled with the policy of entirely deficit financing have had a significant effect on the US economy. As the Bush administration cut taxes, increased spending, and spent borrowed money to finance its wars, the national debt grew to be larger as a percent of the economy than at any time in the nation’s history other than immediately following World War II. Since 2001, additions to the debt have totaled $8.4 trillion, and lost tax revenues totaled $3.6 trillion.\footnote{Montgomery, “On the Way to a Surplus.” Defense spending during this period comprised $1.3 trillion for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, plus $663 billion for other defense needs (primarily in response to 9/11). Tax cuts included $1.7 trillion in 2001/2003, $391 billion cut in Dec 2010, and $678 billion in other cuts during the period. This data is from the Congressional Budget Office, as calculated by the Pew Fiscal Analysis Initiative.} Stiglitz and Bilmes have compiled the most comprehensive analysis of war costs. They estimated the total budgetary costs of Afghanistan and Iraq – comprising military operations through 2007, future operations, veterans’ health care and disability benefits, other military costs (for example, re-equipping the forces and the costs to transport troops and equipment back to the US when the war ends), and interest costs – at $2.3 trillion in their best-case.
scenario. In what they regard as a more realistic but still very conservative scenario (and quite likely still to significantly underestimate real costs), the total rises to $3.5 trillion.\(^{49}\)

Creating Public Support

In the days and weeks immediately following the 11 September attack, the American people stood poised, ready for their government leaders to tell them what they could do to combat this new enemy. Yet, no clarion call was forthcoming, even as military forces were dispatched to Afghanistan, and a year and a half later to Iraq. Instead of issuing a call to action, President George W. Bush’s message was contradictory. On one hand, he described the threat posed by Al Qaeda in dire, existential terms, as an act of war, an attack on civilization and freedom, perpetrated by the heirs of twentieth century fascism, Nazism, and totalitarianism.\(^{50}\) In a radio address, he warned, “We have much to do and much to ask of the American people. You will be asked for your patience, for the conflict will not be short. You will be asked for resolve, for the conflict will not be easy. You will be asked for your strength, because the course to victory may be long.”\(^{51}\)

Other government leaders echoed the president’s descriptions. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, for example, wrote memos to his staff on the need for “bumper sticker” slogans to keep public enthusiasm high, admonishing them to “keep

\(^{49}\) Stiglitz and Bilmes, *Three Trillion Dollar War*, 56. For details on how they arrived at these estimates, see 32-60.


elevating the threat” to “make the American people realize they are surrounded in the world by violent extremists.” In an exchange with reporters, Secretary of State Colin Powell said, “I think every civilized nation in the world recognizes that this was an assault not just against the United States but against civilization.” He went on, “What we have to do is not just go after these perpetrators and those who gave them haven but the whole curse of terrorism that is upon the face of the earth.” Testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee in December 2001, Attorney General John Ashcroft described his morning report as a “chilling daily chronicle of hatred of America by fanatics who seek to extinguish freedom, enslave women, corrupt education and to kill Americans wherever and whenever they can.” He went on to warn of a “terrorist enemy [that] … slaughters innocents [and] … seeks weapons of mass destruction” and of “terrorist operatives [who] infiltrate our communities waiting to kill again.”

On the other hand, the president also emphasized that people should go about their normal business. Answering a journalist’s question regarding how much sacrifice ordinary Americans would have to make in their daily lives, President Bush responded, “Our hope, of course, is that they make no sacrifice whatsoever … we hope … that the measures we take will allow the American economy to continue on. I urge people to go

52 These memos are quoted by Bacevich in “Tyranny of Defense,” 78-9.


54 John Ashcroft, “Testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee,” 6 December 2001, in Foley and O’Malley, 534-5. This material is from his prepared statement. Interestingly, Al Qaeda is mentioned by name only once in the entire statement, otherwise, the enemy is labeled as “terrorists” or “terrorism.”
Thus, despite his descriptions of the threat in apocalyptic and global terms, he took the country to war while requiring nothing of substance from the American people. The things he asked of the public were banal in comparison to his description of the war: “live your lives and hug your children;” be “strong and resolute;” uphold and live by our principles, do not single out people of other religions or ethnic backgrounds; continue contributions to support victims; cooperate with FBI investigators if asked; have “patience with the delays and inconveniences that may accompany tighter security;” continue to participate and have confidence in the American economy; and continue to pray for victims, their families, and the military. He made it clear the government would take care of the problem, the public should “have faith in the military,” go back to work, and live their lives as normally as possible.\(^5\)

The public’s attitude regarding the war on terror would seem to match the president’s contradictory message. On the one hand, public support for the war was high, especially in the beginning. From October to December 2001, approval for action in Afghanistan was 86 to 90 percent, and the average from September 2001 to June 2002 was 72 percent. In Larson and Savych’s analysis, the public’s acceptance of the war “essentially gave President Bush a free hand in defining which situations should be considered to be part of the [war on terror] and which should not.” The president then

\(^5\) G.W. Bush, “Remarks in a Meeting With the National Security Team and an Exchange With Reporters at Camp David, Maryland,” 15 September 2001, *Public Papers, 2001*, Book II, 1113. In his radio address of 22 September 2001, the president emphasized the continuation of tax relief efforts to help spur the economy, 1145. And in “Remarks to Airline Employees in Chicago, Illinois” on 27 September 2001, he urged Americans to “get down to Disney World … take your families and enjoy life the way we want it to be enjoyed,” 1172.

benefited from this situation when it came to initiating the war in Iraq. Support for this action never reached the heights of that for Afghanistan, but from January 2002 to March 2003, consistently around half the public or slightly above considered it worthwhile in terms of potential casualties and other costs to remove Saddam Hussein from power. The level of support jumped to 77 percent in March 2003, after the United States launched its attack, and stayed consistently above 70 percent through the end of major combat operations at the end of April.\(^{57}\)

On the other hand, even immediately following the 11 September attack, only 45 percent of the public considered terrorism the most important problem facing the nation. By September of the following year, less than 20 percent did so.\(^{58}\) With the exception of March 2002 (24 percent), the percentage remained consistently below 20 percent, and since January 2008, the portion has been three percent or less.\(^{59}\) Regarding the importance of Iraq relative to other issues facing the nation, only 29 percent considered it most important in March 2003 when the US attack began. Two months later, it was below 10 percent (coinciding with the premature declaration of “mission accomplished”).\(^{60}\) Surveys in the past two years have combined the questions of the

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\(^{58}\) Ibid., 105-6.


\(^{60}\) Larson and Savych, *Public Support*, 190.
importance of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, with results in the three to five percent range – coinciding with the drawdown in Iraq and the promised troop reductions in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{61} Given President Bush’s emphasis on the economy, even in his war messages, it is understandable that even before the economic crisis of 2008-2009 poll respondents considered the economy to be more important than the war by a wide margin, except in the winter of 2003-2004.\textsuperscript{62} The public’s lack of concern about the war indicates that the rhetoric of existential threat was ineffective, and it is reasonable to question whether the failure to ask the public to do anything substantive caused them to regard terrorism as less of a threat than portrayed by government leaders.

In addition to this general decline in support, there was outright opposition to the Bush administration’s actions, especially to the war in Iraq. There was also opposition to specific policies and measures implemented under the rubric of the war on terror, including curtailing of civil liberties and widespread, unsanctioned electronic spying; the torture and rendition of prisoners; the abuse of prisoners, such as at Abu Ghraib; the holding of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba indefinitely, without trial, and so on. However, the extent of public support for the president’s actions undercut the effectiveness of this opposition, especially regarding the war on terror, in general. The

\textsuperscript{61} Pew, “Views of Middle East Unchanged;” “Broad Support.”

response to those who demanded the end to such practices as electronic eavesdropping and “water-boarding” of prisoners was summed up by Attorney General Ashcroft when he declared, “Your tactics only aid terrorists – for they erode our national unity and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to America’s enemies, and pause to America’s friends.”

Organized protests occurred both in the United States and other locations around the world as it became clear the Bush administration was determined to initiate a war with Iraq. An umbrella organization called United for Peace and Justice was formed in October 2002 to consolidate antiwar efforts. Initially comprising over 70 antiwar organizations, it later claimed over 1,400. It played a role in arranging worldwide war protests on 15 February 2003, which occurred in 750 locations with the participation of millions of people. A subsequent protest in New York City on 22 March numbered about 300,000 people. United for Peace and Justice also lobbied elected representatives and succeeded in garnering antiwar resolutions from some city councils and trade unions. But these actions amounted to a mere drop in the bucket when compared to the attitudes evinced by the larger population, and the timing of the protests so closely to the beginning of hostilities ensured that while they registered the opinion of the protesters, they had no real chance of influencing government decision makers.

A second face of war protest seized the attention of the public for a short time at least when Ms. Cindy Sheehan asked to meet with the president to receive an

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explanation of what her son, Casey, had died for in Iraq. She began a vigil outside President Bush’s home in Crawford, Texas on 6 August 2005. Originally alone, after just a few days her story was widely publicized. Her actions then became the focus of war protesters pursuing various agendas and spewing hatred for the president, who set up a tent camp, accompanied by a media circus of considerable proportions. A collection of counter-protestors whose message was love for the president and the spreading of criticism, wicked rumors, and vile lies about Sheehan soon matched the antiwar encampment. Lost in the invective from both sides was Sheehan’s quest for a reasoned dialogue about the war. The vitriol from both sides also allowed the president to sidestep the issue and remain above the fray. The protest movement against the war failed to gain much traction, and media attention rather quickly ebbed.

Over time, though, the opinion of the broader public began to shift away from support for the conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan, with negative views of the war in Iraq appearing more quickly. At the beginning of that conflict, 75 percent of respondents said that sending troops to fight there was not a mistake. The trend lines for this question crossed in mid-2005. Since then a higher percentage of the public has believed it was a mistake than not. The change of opinion regarding Afghanistan has been less stark, but by early 2011, support for the commitment there had dipped below 50 percent, with multiple surveys indicating nearly 60 percent of respondents felt that

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65 This description is based on Matt Taibbi, “Bush vs. the Mother,” in Foley and O’Malley, 600-6.

US troops should not be there. In a Washington Post-ABC News poll in March 2011, 64 percent said the war in Afghanistan had not been worth fighting and nearly 75 percent wanted a substantial drawdown of troops.

Yet, opinion differs from “opposition” in the same way that it differs from mobilization. The declining support was not the same as “opposition” to the war, or at least it was not treated that way by either the Bush or Obama administration. In fact, in late 2009 as 44 percent said the war in Afghanistan was not worth the cost, President Obama increased the number of troops deployed there by 30,000. The nation’s leaders could afford to do so because while the public had opinions about these commitments, they were not of primary concern one way or the other.

The public’s disengagement goes hand in hand with a dearth of media coverage. In 2010, for example, the Pew Research Center found that coverage of the war in Afghanistan seldom rose above five percent of all US news stories. Similarly, President Obama has not made Afghanistan prominent in his rhetoric, and it was not a key issue of the 2008 presidential campaign. President Bush also approved the troop “surge” and accompanying commitment to long-term counterinsurgency operations in Iraq despite a significant decline in public support for the United States’ involvement there. Although the United States has withdrawn its troops from Iraq and plans future


69 Ibid.

70 Pletka, “War Without Champion.”
significant reductions for Afghanistan, the link between those changes and public opinion appears to be indirect, at best.

In sum, one can see that the Bush administration approach to the war on terror follows the same pattern of minimalist mobilization of the public as had been established and evolved through the latter years of the Cold War and the 1990s. The threat was presented as existential, but the public did not have to do anything other than acquiesce to the government’s actions. The military and government experts would take care of the problem while the rest of the country pursued its normal activities. Journalist George Packer observes that the home front is, consequently, different than during both World War II and Vietnam, with war neither bringing the country together nor tearing it apart. Rather, the conflict is “strangely distant,” a blank slate onto which people can project anything they want, a circumstance that is, perhaps, testament to the fact that the threat was not existential in the first place.

Conclusion

As the Bush administration considered its response to the terrorist attack and the question of mobilizing the nation for war, it was captive to the trends enumerated in the previous chapter, the context of the war on terror, and its own decisions and rhetoric. The post-Cold War pattern of relying on the standing, professional military and the military-industrial complex while minimizing the public’s engagement was maintained. Whether through conscious choice or lack of imagination, the nation’s leaders

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71 George Packer, “The Home Front,” in Foley and O’Malley, 583. Packer was writing about Iraq, but his observations are equally true for Afghanistan and the larger war on terror.
squandered the emotions and energy of the public as they stood poised for action in response to an attack on their homeland.

To be sure, there were contextual factors specific to the prosecution of the war that obviated against mobilizing the country on a large scale. Primary among these was the rapid conclusion of the “regime change” campaigns in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, the initial reliance on small special forces units in Afghanistan, the emergence of compelling stories and visuals of those troops in native garb galloping on horseback while guiding precision airstrikes, as well as the “from the front” reports of embedded journalists in Iraq, reinforced the “war as spectator sport” effect – a task performed by “the military” on the far side of the globe in places of little direct concern, not the focus of the nation’s efforts. After the rapidly moving, large-scale operations to depose the Taliban government in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, frustrating, indeterminate counterinsurgency, counterterrorist, and nation-building operations were the order of the day. It is difficult to keep the nation engaged when the measures of progress are things like miles of roadway open to traffic and hours of electricity provided.

The increased reliance on covert operations, which began under the Bush administration but has grown under President Obama, has exacerbated the public’s detachment from and sense of the war as spectator sport. The nature of the enemy and their scattered locations among the “ungoverned spaces” around the globe make this operational choice understandable, but the necessity of secrecy in pursuing these enemies makes it next to impossible to foster a sense of public engagement. The
increasing use of remotely piloted vehicles and other standoff weapons further reinforces the spectator motif.

Beyond these contextual factors, the Bush administration’s policies and decisions also limited the nation’s mobilization. In particular, the government downplayed and to an extent obscured the human costs of the war. The administration prohibited media coverage of the return to Dover AFB, Delaware of those killed in action, a prohibition since lifted by the Obama administration (coverage is now at the discretion of the families). About 55 percent of families permit the coverage, and immediately following the policy change, dozens of journalists would arrive. Since then, media interest has become minimal. Coverage of wounded troops returning from the war zones has also been significantly constrained. Although the DOD’s stated concerns about the privacy of the troops and their families are a valid consideration, these policies still effectively shield the public from the war. The most significant policy undermining the mobilization of the country was the Bush administration’s decision to finance the war entirely with deficit spending. Instead of sacrifice, their leaders told Americans their primary patriotic duty was to spend more to ensure a strong economy.


73 Although defense representatives deny any deliberate policy, almost all flights with wounded arrive late at night, and photographs of arrivals at military hospitals in the United States are prohibited. Mark Benjamin, “The Invisible Wounded,” in Foley and O’Malley, 571-5.

74 Stiglitz and Bilmes, Three Trillion Dollar War, 62-3. Further, even though the names of those killed in action are usually released shortly after the next of kin are notified and casualty figures are available on DOD websites, Stiglitz and Bilmes found that DOD underreported the casualty numbers by announcing publicly only combat casualties (omitting non-combat injuries and illnesses) and being selective about those they classified as combat-related. When Bilmes first published these findings using data from the Department of Veterans Affairs combined with published DOD information, DOD forced the VA to use only DOD data and essentially hid the larger numbers.
Another important key to understanding the Bush administration’s “non-mobilization” is understanding the trap created by its own rhetoric. President Bush followed the precedent established during the Truman administration of presenting a simplified, “clearer than truth” explanation of the threat, designed to scare the public into supporting its policies. However, this exaggerated depiction of the menace posed by Al Qaeda and terrorists, in general, was largely counter-productive. This is not to downplay either the tragedy or the seriousness of the September attack, but the distorted perspective evident in labeling it an act of war and in crediting Al Qaeda’s stated intent at the same level as its capabilities implied that the risk to the nation was qualitatively greater than the reality.75

At the same time, the president presented the nation with a contradiction in directing that Americans should go about their normal lives. This guidance was, at least in part, an apt reaction to terrorist tactics. Since the goal of terrorism is to create fear leading to paralysis or societal breakdown, not giving in to that fear – normalcy – is “winning.” But President Bush deliberately created fear while emphasizing the “wrong kind of normal.” Rather than engendering this schizophrenic coupling of great fear with “business as usual” for the public, which precludes a reasoned debate and undermines rational decision-making, the goal should have been to acknowledge the threat as real, but not existential. Therefore, the nation would have to face and accept risk, since no amount of money would prevent every attack. The right kind of normal requires not only a focus on preventing major or catastrophic attacks, but even more importantly, creating

and maintaining the “cultural resilience” to adhere to the nation’s fundamental values and not overreact, thus handing victory to the terrorists.76

While this overall pattern of minimal mobilization had become the norm over the course of the Cold War and 1990s, the long-term commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq, have highlighted inherent weaknesses in this approach that had previously been masked. One of the primary weaknesses is the limits imposed by the size of the all-volunteer military. The extended pattern of repeated deployments has stretched the US military, especially the ground forces, to the breaking point – a situation ameliorated but not overcome by the extensive use of the reserves. The repeated call-ups of reserve forces with their insertion into a “normal” rotation pattern for employment in counter-insurgency and nation-building tasks has spread the pain of repeated deployments, but has not significantly broadened the engagement of the nation in the war. Reserve forces are just another element in that small portion of the population that volunteers to wear a uniform.

The limitations imposed by the relatively small size of the uniformed military have also led to the pervasive use of civilian contractors, often to accomplish functions previously considered reserved to the uniformed forces. The consequences of this reliance are myriad. However well meaning individual contractors might be (and many are former military members), the overarching corporate motive and focus of owners and

shareholders is profit. Add to that fact a lack of oversight, haste in letting contracts, and limited or no competition, and the temptations for fraud and profiteering are replete. As noted previously, investigations have revealed many who succumbed to those temptations. Additionally, the extensive use of contractors obfuscates costs (both human and financial) and blurs the boundaries of what is supposed to be an inherent function of the state, the use of armed force.

Of even greater concern is the burden of military service carried by less than one percent of the population and the consequent ever-widening gulf between the military and the society it serves. While neither civilian nor military leaders advocate a return to the draft, many are concerned about this separation.\(^77\) Marine Corps Lieutenant General John Kelly has spoken of the sense of isolation of the military. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen warned that the public does not know its military, and the military does not know the society it serves. Former representative Ike Skelton (D-MO) wrote, “those who protect us are psychologically divorced from those who are being protected.”\(^78\) Citing the extraordinary stress on the force as evidenced by greatly increased divorce and suicide rates, Secretary Gates raised the question of how long the troops could continue to carry this burden.\(^79\)


\(^78\) These sentiments are summarized in Greg Jaffe, “One Percent of Americans are Touched by This War,” Washington Post (2 March 2011), A1, A16.

\(^79\) Gates, “Lecture at Duke University.”
In the meantime, most of the public seems content with applauding their heroes from afar. As Secretary Gates noted, the lack of interest in military service among young people, especially those from upper income brackets and elite schools, is palpable. “Whatever their fond sentiments for men and women in uniform, for most Americans the wars remain an abstraction. A distant and unpleasant series of news items that does not affect them personally. … [and] service in the military, no matter how laudable, has become something for other people to do.”

A second inherent weakness of the minimalist mobilization is that, as President Johnson discovered and is now being re-learned, the commitment to a guns and butter approach does have negative economic consequences. Congress not only acquiesced to financing the war through deficit spending, but encouraged the practice. Finally, however, the financial crisis that began in 2008 has brought a spotlight to the money being poured into the war, estimated as accounting for 23 percent of the deficit since 2003. Among others, Representatives James McGovern (D-MA) and Walter Jones (R-NC) have decried the previous lack of attention, noting that the war was not an issue during the 2010 mid-term elections and that President Obama had spent less than a minute on it in his hour-long 2011 state of the union address. They claim that this longest war in US history is bankrupting the nation and that the costs, both financial and human, are “unacceptable and unsustainable.” The economic crisis is certainly not totally attributable to war costs, but the decision to finance the war entirely with deficit spending has been a significant contributing factor.

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80 Ibid.

A third inherent weakness of the minimalist approach centers on the power and influence of the military-industrial complex with its well-known propensities for fraud and profiteering and bureaucratic, institutional barriers to adaptation and change. Everyone “supports the troops,” but military production and military bases have come to be viewed primarily as employment programs rather than elements of strategy subject to modification based on operational needs. The emphasis on major weapon systems as profit centers and links to jobs spread across the maximum number of congressional districts makes it difficult to adjust production or spending priorities. These problems are not new to the war on terror, and indeed, have been long acknowledged, but their most deleterious consequences, masked by the brevity of military commitments in the 1990s, have been highlighted by the long-term obligations assumed in the 2000s.

In total, the Bush administration’s approach to mobilization, or the lack thereof, can be seen as a logical culmination of trends that began immediately after World War II and were seemingly validated in the post-Cold War period. Clearly, the central construct of mass mobilization as founded during the industrialized wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is no longer useful. Neither the United States nor any other nation engages in mass warfare requiring the commitment of the majority of its resources. At the same time, both the government and the American public have become so accustomed to the opposite extreme, that it raises no doubts or questions. The minimalist approach of downplaying and obfuscating costs, eschewing the need for sacrifices of any kind, exaggerating the threat, and conducting the resulting war as an “out of sight, out of mind” process has become the norm – so much so that there is no perception of difference between a limited commitment or small conflict where such an
approach is acceptable and a more significant commitment where the consequences are as enumerated above. The final chapter will explore the implications of this state of affairs and the possibility of a form of mobilization occupying the space between these extremes.
CHAPTER 7  
CONCLUSION  

The goal of this study has been to clarify and refine the understanding of mobilizing for war on a conceptual level. In the course of doing that, it seeks to identify the underlying social forces, policy mismatches or failures, and opportunities to improve mobilization mechanisms that have accompanied changes in the mobilization processes of the case studies examined. This final chapter will present a refined concept of mobilization in the form of a process model and summary of the evolution of the analytical variables. It will then discuss two major conceptual obstacles that influence the thinking of policymakers and critics alike. Finally, it will examine implications for the future of mobilizing for war from an American perspective.  

The Analytical Framework  

The table that follows comprises a summary model of the changes in mobilization processes in the United States over the period represented by the cases. It must be emphasized that the descriptive labels used in the model are abstractions of complex and interrelated processes. Such a description is valuable precisely because the higher level of abstraction permits useful comparisons across cases and, thus, generalizations about the concept of mobilization. The table brings to light the evolution of each of the analytical variables, from World War I to the present day. Following the table, each will be summarized in turn.
### Process Model of Mobilization Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mobilization of Military</th>
<th>Mobilization of Economy/Industry</th>
<th>Mobilization of Public</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major War</strong></td>
<td>Small professional military</td>
<td>Shift production to war material</td>
<td>Government propaganda organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917-1945</td>
<td>Primarily conscription</td>
<td>Profit motive</td>
<td>Threats depicted as existential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bond drives; increased taxes</td>
<td>Motivations/objectives depicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deficit spending a wartime expedient</td>
<td>in idealist terms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Action required/sacrifice necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cold War</strong></td>
<td>Large standing military</td>
<td>Military-industrial complex</td>
<td>Existential threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-1989</td>
<td>Large strategic reserve force</td>
<td>Defense as normal budget item</td>
<td>Idealist motivations/objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primarily conscription; transition to volunteer force</td>
<td>Deficit spending normal</td>
<td>Action/sacrifice limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limited War</strong></td>
<td>Professional all-volunteer force</td>
<td>Military-industrial complex</td>
<td>“Dangerous world”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Strategic reserve component</td>
<td>Defense as normal budget item</td>
<td>Idealist motivations/objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment choice</td>
<td>Deficit spending normal</td>
<td>No actions/no sacrifice</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Support/acquiesce</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Detachment; war as spectator sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>War on Terror</strong></td>
<td>Professional all-volunteer force</td>
<td>Military-industrial complex</td>
<td>Existential threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-present</td>
<td>Professional reserve component</td>
<td>Major spending increases</td>
<td>Idealist motivations/objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment choice</td>
<td>Normal budget + repeated</td>
<td>No actions/no sacrifice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civilian contractors</td>
<td>supplemental requests</td>
<td>Support/acquiesce</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>War entirely deficit financed</td>
<td>Detachment/war as spectator sport</td>
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### Mobilization of the Military

The mobilization of the military has evolved from a mass warfare model to a limited war model. In the major war cases, the United States relied on a small standing military force that was significantly increased upon the declaration of war or shortly before. The government used conscription to gain this increase and as a means to manage the allocation of scarce manpower between military and industrial needs. The draft was a matter of overt government compulsion, but was couched in voluntaristic language that emphasized the obligations of citizenship.

After World War II, the Cold War strategy of containment required a standing military much larger than in past peacetime periods, which retained an element of the mass warfare model in its reliance on an even larger reserve force in anticipation of another world war. The Selective Service System also retained its focus on preparation for another world war, but its day-to-day operation became a matter of managing the...
abundant manpower pool created by a rising population. The resulting inequities regarding who was required to serve and the general distrust of government arising from the Vietnam War combined to delegitimize the government’s power to compel service as well as the notion of military service as an obligation to society. As a result, the military transitioned to an all-volunteer force in the latter years of the Cold War and the post-Cold War 1990s. Military service came to be seen as an employment choice. The relatively large reserve forces remained a vestige of the mass military model, intended for call-up in the event of a major war.

By the advent of the war on terror, both the active and reserve forces had been thoroughly professionalized, and the thought of returning to conscription to raise the force was anathema to almost all government and military leaders, as well as the general public. Regardless of the personal motivations of individual service members, the notion of military service as employment and a matter of personal freedom of choice was the accepted perspective. Military members were respected for both their competence and their sacrifice, but were also isolated from the society they served.

**Mobilization of Economy and Industry**

Mobilization of the economy and industry for mass warfare required major shifts in priorities. Production of war materials took precedence over that of consumer goods, and the added capabilities of the private sector dwarfed production from existing government arsenals and government-owned production facilities, especially during World War II. While appeals to the patriotism of owners and workers alike were not without effect, an emphasis on profit was accepted in keeping with the commitment of the government to maintain a capitalist economy. The government financed the world
wars with a combination of increased taxes, sales of government bonds, and deficit spending, with the latter considered a necessary wartime expedient.

The view of defense production and financing as primarily a wartime necessity was discarded during the Cold War. Although the government reduced taxes and defense budgets after World War II ended, they never returned to their equivalent pre-war levels. Instead, spending on “national security” became a standard budget item, defense industries became an integral portion of the national economy, and the arms race with the Soviets resulted in a close partnership between private firms and the military services – the military-industrial complex reached maturity.

This pattern of a perpetually mobilized sector of the economy has persisted to the present day. The limited wars and other military commitments undertaken during the Cold War and the 1990s required no shifts of production away from consumer goods. Defense production and military bases became at least as important for their impact on the domestic economy as for their strategic value. Budget cuts and reduced defense spending in the 1990s led to reductions in production and the consolidation of firms within the defense industry, but the military-industrial complex retained its power and was reinvigorated with the massive increases in spending after the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001.

**Mobilization of the Public**

The government used dedicated propaganda organizations and large-scale propaganda campaigns to mobilize the public for the world wars. Established societal norms, opinion leaders, and an education system collectively focused on unity and nationalist values aided the purposes of mobilization. But because there was no direct
danger to the public, war was an “affair of the mind” – the government had to create a picture of the threat, the nation’s goals, and the level of effort required. The message thus transmitted focused on the purported existential nature of the threat, but also emphasized idealist motivations and objectives. The United States was fighting not to obtain empire or for revenge but to defend and extend its values (which were proclaimed to be universal values). The public was asked to take specific actions to participate in the war effort (complying with the draft, paying taxes, buying bonds, conserving resources, working in war industries) and to sacrifice (rationing of foodstuffs, consumer goods unavailable), at least for a time. Their participation and sacrifice would be rewarded after the war.

The nature of the Cold War and the limited conflicts subsumed within it precluded the type of mass public mobilization required during the world wars. The emphasis on an existential threat and the idealist characterizations of US motivations and objectives remained, but the general population was required to do less and less in terms of specific actions to participate in the standoff with communism. This gradual detachment of the public gained momentum with the fragmenting of societal norms brought about by the “youth movement” of the 1960s and exacerbated by the protests and controversies surrounding the Vietnam War. In particular, the transition to an all-volunteer military beginning in 1973 significantly undermined the notion of military service as an obligation to society.

By the end of the Cold War and throughout the limited military engagements of the 1990s, the public could take pride in the idealist justifications for the nation’s chosen wars, but at the same time, it could remain on the sidelines, as spectators to their
conduct. They were asked only to support or acquiesce to the government’s actions, but need make no sacrifices or participate in any other way. Public “mobilization” became only a matter of influencing public opinion to give sanction to the government’s decisions, while most individuals remained detached and often disinterested.

The beginning of the war on terror brought no meaningful changes to this pattern of public mobilization. Although couching the threat in existential terms and linking it to the objective of “ridding the world of terrorists” implied a major effort on the part of the United States, the public could take solace that no sacrifices would be required. Supportive of the government’s policies to protect them from terrorism and appreciative of the sacrifices made by their military forces, they cheered from the sidelines initially, and quickly returned to the detached and disinterested state that has become the norm.

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This framework clarifies the concept of mobilization on several levels. First, it confirms that dividing the concept into its constituent elements permits a more precise discussion of the topic. To understand the idea of mobilization in a holistic sense, it is necessary to understand its major components. Second, it makes clear that a major shift occurred after World War II. As armies and warfare moved away from the mass model of industrialized conflict, mobilization shifted from being a temporary, abnormal expedient during major wars to being a “less mobilized” but more or less permanent and normal condition for the military and a segment of the economy and industry, while at the same time being essentially unnecessary for the majority of the economy and industry. Third, it makes clear that despite this major discontinuity, there were also significant continuities in mobilization processes, particularly the reliance on depicting
the threats faced by the United States as existential and the objectives and motivations for fighting in idealist terms in mobilizing the public. These clarifications make it easier to raise relevant questions about the nature of mobilizing for war both now and in the future. However, there remain two major impediments to gaining a clear understanding of the nature of mobilization in the current context and to considering its continued evolution.

Impediments to Thinking Clearly About Mobilization

The first of these obstacles is the mythology of World War II and its continuing resonance as a model of how wars are to be fought – and by extension as a model of how the nation is to be mobilized. In particular, the perception that US involvement in World War II was “uniquely popular” has become widespread in recent years. While the war was, indeed, widely supported, such characterizations are overstatements. President Roosevelt, in fact, was troubled by consistent undercurrents of dissatisfaction among the public, their lack of understanding of the enemies they faced, and the lukewarm response to some of his policies. ¹ The glossing over of such nuances in favor of the “good war” perspective was brought to the fore and gained widespread acceptance with the celebrations of significant anniversaries of major wartime events, such as President Ronald Reagan memorializing the “boys of Pointe du Hoc” on the fortieth anniversary of the landings at Normandy.² Popular books and movies such as Tom Brokaw’s The

¹ On this point see, Steven Casey, Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War Against Nazi Germany (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), xvii-xviii.
Greatest Generation, Stephen Ambrose’s Band of Brothers (also made into a widely viewed television mini-series), and the Academy Award winning motion picture Saving Private Ryan served to embed further in the public’s consciousness the view of World War II as the good war. Even more sober government observers were not immune to this mindset. Indeed the so-called Weinberger and Powell doctrines, with their emphasis placed on clearly stated objectives, maximum effort, and explicit public support, can be seen as an outgrowth of this harking back to a “better” form of warfare.

This popularization of World War II as the preferred model is evident not only in public perceptions but also in presidential rhetoric and media discourse. Both during and after the Persian Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush made explicit comparisons to the “bad war” that was Vietnam and to World War II as a model for his management of the war. Use and misuse by the George W. Bush administration, media, and other

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commentators of the World War II analogy in discussing the war on terror and the invasion and occupation of Iraq was ubiquitous. The comparisons of the 11 September attack to Pearl Harbor were instantaneous, including references to a “day that will live in infamy.” The serendipitous image of firefighters in New York raising the US flag over the smoldering ruins was paired with the iconic photo of the Marines raising the flag over Iwo Jima. Opponents and critics of administration policies were immediately labeled with that most pejorative World War II epithet – appeasers. The administration consistently asserted that the occupation of Iraq would follow a similar course and lead to similar results as the occupations of Germany and Japan (with particular emphasis on Japan), even though, as historian John Dower has made clear, “virtually every factor that contributed to the reform and recovery of the two defeated Axis powers was missing or severely lacking in Iraq.”

As highlighted in Chapter 3 of this work, mobilization for World War II was much more complex than the idealized impressions presented in popular histories and used in explaining and justifying these recent conflicts. Further, as has also been seen herein, the forms of warfare and mobilization have changed radically since World War II ended. Even if national leaders wanted to follow that mobilization pattern, it would not be possible. Yet, the references to World War II as an ideal model recur. Until

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6 See John W. Dower, Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor/Hiroshima/9-11/Iraq (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), xxvii, 4-14 for the links drawn between WW II and the war on terror. For a detailed analysis of the Japan-Iraq occupation analogy, see 313-58.
presidents and their advisers, as well as the critics who decry the lack of mobilization, break the habit of using World War II as the standard, it will remain difficult to have a reasoned discussion of the proper form of mobilizing for war.

The second obstacle to thinking clearly about mobilization is the government’s reliance on what has become an unexamined assumption specific to public mobilization. That is, that the public is too uninformed and disinterested to be a meaningful part of the foreign policy debate. This assumption amounts to a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the public is consistently told to go about their lives while government experts take care of problems, they will remain disengaged and disinterested. Additionally, if the people become accustomed to their voices not counting, even when opposed to government policies, they may simply acquiesce to those policies because they see no recourse.  

On the surface, it may appear that this minimalist approach to mobilization is preferable, especially if one is concerned that the public may overreact to a perceived threat. It is also appealing to government leaders who “know what is best” in coping with complex foreign policy problems requiring military interventions of indeterminate length. After all, George Marshall’s well-known dictum that a democracy cannot fight a “seven years war” seems to have gone by the wayside, with the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq both past that imaginary limit. This view is, however, shortsighted.

The commitment of the military to such open-ended conflicts without some form of public engagement is harmful to democratic values on several levels. First, it undermines the fundamental and necessary process of checking executive power. As

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long as political leaders accept the view of the public as uninformed or apathetic, they justify both manipulation of and disregard for public opinion.\(^8\) The American people have a right and a duty, through their elected representatives, to have greater influence than has been evident in recent conflicts over both whether the military is committed to war and how long those commitments will last.

Second, such disengagement and lack of oversight allows the American people to be too detached from the killing and destruction done in their name. The ugliness and evil of war is sometimes necessary, but the war as spectator sport approach makes it too easy to look away, especially from the degradation of their own soldiers’ lives, the harm inflicted on others (whether combatants or as “collateral damage”), and the even uglier occasions when the military steps over the line, such as the Abu Ghraib abuses. A closer understanding of and sense of responsibility for wars fought on behalf of society is necessary to ensure that the choice to go to war is a last resort.

Third, the lack of public engagement exacerbates the sense of isolation and unequal burden sharing of the military.\(^9\) The tiny portion of the population in uniform inevitably asks why they should devote themselves to the country when so few do so. The answer to that question potentially leads to a force of well-paid mercenaries, an exodus from the military, or a military that feels itself superior to the citizenry it serves –

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\(^8\) The media is often complicit in this process, in two ways. It often fails to report or fails to emphasize significant differences between opinion polls and government policies. Additionally, it almost always privileges institutional messages over opposition, thereby helping to marginalize opposition by simply drowning it out. Bennett, “Marginalizing the Majority,” 323-4, 325-6.

\(^9\) Recently, former Army officer Will Bardenwerper highlighted the ironic juxtaposition of the Occupy Wall Street movement’s “99 percent” against the less than one percent who serve in the US armed forces and cited the anonymity of an Army Ranger sergeant recently killed while on his fourteenth deployment. See “The Forgotten 1 Percent: Where is the Movement to Discuss the War?” Washington Post, 11 November 2011, A27.
none of which is supportive of maintaining the values cherished by a democracy. If citizens have only rights without obligations, democracy fails.

There is another, equally problematic, aspect of the public’s decoupling from the nation’s wars and the forces that fight for them. Journalist William Deresiewicz labels it a “cult of the uniform,” which began with the “not-Vietnam” notion that one supports the troops regardless of opinions about whatever war they are fighting. This laudable impulse has, however, devolved into a kind of “emotional blackmail” that “has immunized [the military] from blame, and inoculates the rest of [the population] from thought.” The public puts its military on a pedestal, sentimentalizing the burden it bears instead of sharing it, critics are held at bay with charges of “undermining the troops,” and political leaders charged with oversight often tip-toe around general officers to the point of obsequiousness. This overriding deference paid to the military results in a kind of “citizenship-by-proxy” whereby the public keeps the reality of war at arm’s length, and the military is free to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on wars and future wars with minimal scrutiny.\(^\text{10}\)

The consequence of the public’s assumed indifference to foreign policy issues is another assumption – that the only way to gain acquiescence to government decisions to use military force is to rely on simplistic, moralistic explanations of US motives and objectives, exaggeration of threats, and scare tactics. This consequent assumption is, in many ways, logically absurd and also undermines democratic values. The absurdity arises from the paradox created by the open-ended pursuit of “security” as practiced

during the Cold War and revitalized with the war on terror. The perpetual preparedness required for such long-term confrontations undermines the traditional rhetoric used to mobilize the citizenry. The public recognizes that much of that rhetoric is exaggerated and unrealistic, as indicated by its initial response to crisis then rapid reversion to considering other issues as more important. In reality, while the United States has at times faced grave threats to its vital interests, the survival of the nation has not been directly threatened since 1861. In such circumstances, these techniques of public mobilization typically elicit public enthusiasm in the short term, but almost inevitably create a cynical backlash when the exaggerations and over-simplifications are exposed.\(^\text{11}\)

A further dichotomy arises when the government portrays the threat as existential but does not ask the public to contribute in any way to facing that threat, to include paying for the wars that result. A similar rhetorical mismatch arises from statements of expansive, altruistic objectives (spreading democracy and freedom to all; ridding the world of terrorism) and the typical limits on costs and commitments the United States is willing to incur.

This secondary assumption undermines democratic values because the rhetoric of existential threats is often translated into a disregard for or weakening of legal protections for citizens’ rights, witch hunts (for German saboteurs, communists, or Islamic terrorists), and the charge that questioning government policies is equivalent to aiding the enemy and undermining the troops. The weakening of democratic protections typically is justified as a wartime exigency, but it often proves difficult to restore fully.

those protections at war’s end. Further, when the war is posited as open-ended, such as
the war on terror, there is danger the public will acquiesce to a “new normal” rather than
insisting on a return to the “pre-war” state.

The choice between a World War II approach and a minimalist approach created
by these obstacles to thinking clearly about mobilization is a false dichotomy. Clearly, a
World War II-style mobilization no longer fits the strategic context. Equally clearly, the
decoupled, disinterested public of the recent past and current day is unsatisfactory.
There is a middle way between these two extremes, however, where the public is not
fully mobilized in the no-longer-applicable sense of mass warfare, but is mobilized to a
greater degree than the recent practice of generating consent and then relying on
indifference. This middle way can be regarded as an “engaged” public, and can be
illustrated using the circumstances of the war on terror.

Choosing this middle way of “engaging the public” would have allowed the Bush
administration to enroll the American people in specific positive actions rather than just
asking for intellectual or emotional “support” for the war. Among possible positive acts,
foremost should have been the requirement to pay for the war, at least in part. Robert
Hormats points out that earlier presidents who persuaded the public willingly to pay
higher taxes and buy bonds not only raised extraordinary amounts, but by that process
“mobilized the home front and made it feel engaged in the cause.”¹² As President
Roosevelt so aptly put it, “War costs money. . . . That means taxes and bonds and bonds

If the war on terrorism is worth fighting over the long term, then the public should face the costs of defending the nation instead of leaving them to be borne by future generations. Immediately after the terrorist attack, the American people appeared to be more than willing. Initial support for the war was very high; over 80 percent favored military action against those responsible. From October through December of 2001, approval for the war in Afghanistan ranged from 86 to 90 percent, and the average from September 2001 to June 2002 was 72 percent. More importantly, equally high percentages expected the war to be long and difficult and were willing to accept thousands of US military casualties. It would take a cynic, indeed, to suggest that the public was willing to spend lives but not money.

A second possible act of mobilization could have been a drive to conserve energy (incentivized, for example, by a gasoline surtax), increase energy efficiency in high-consumption sectors (like motor vehicles), and find and exploit new domestic energy sources. Such a campaign would have been similar to the world war bond drives. It, too, would have had nationwide effect in engaging the public – if it had been effectively and directly tied to the war effort. A simple expedient such as posting signs on gasoline pumps noting the amount of tax used for war costs would keep the link between energy and the war clear to a majority of the population. However, instead of making that link clear, the Senate, in March 2002, refused to pass even one such initiative, with 62

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13 Roosevelt, “The Militarists of Berlin and Tokyo Started This War. But the Massed, Angered Forces of Common Humanity Will Finish It” – Address to the Congress on the State of the Union, 6 January 1942, Public Papers, 1942, 38.

14 Polling data is from Larson and Savych, Public Support, 93-8.
members voting against establishing stricter fuel efficiency standards for motor vehicles.\textsuperscript{15}

Another avenue with potential to increase public engagement across the nation arose when Congress approved expansion of the ground forces and the services, especially the Army, began having difficulty meeting recruiting goals. The Army extended age limits and lowered enlistment standards, and all the services increased their recruitment and advertising budgets.\textsuperscript{16} However, the president and other national leaders also could have launched a nationwide campaign to encourage enlistments (among all young people, not just those with few other educational or economic options) based on service, sacrifice, and the defense of the nation.

Any program to mobilize the country, and especially public mobilization, must take into account what psychologists Fathali Moghaddam and James Breckenridge have identified as an “opportunity bubble.”\textsuperscript{17} They contend that the public’s typical response to a crisis includes a willingness to sacrifice significantly for the greater good, “if [its] role is clearly explained and accompanied by ample means to readily acquire information about the crisis, future threats, and the government’s response.” They

\textsuperscript{15} This action is suggested by Hormats, \textit{Price of Liberty}, 262, 296-8. He labels such an approach “energy patriotism.”

\textsuperscript{16} The DOD budget for recruiting and retention programs increased from $3.4 to $3.7 billion from 2004 to 2008. Steve Vogel, “Military Recruiting Faces a Budget Cut,” \textit{Washington Post}, 11 May 2009, A15. This article focuses on the improving recruiting picture resulting in the Obama administration’s plan to reduce recruiting budgets.

\textsuperscript{17} An earlier researcher, Anthony Downs, argued in similar fashion that public opinion and attention are subject to a “systematic issue-attention cycle” in which issues become central, remain at the forefront of public attention for a relatively brief period, then public attention gradually ebbs, even though the original problem likely remains unsolved. See “Up and Down with Ecology: The ‘Issue-Attention Cycle’,” \textit{Public Interest} 28 (1972): 38. For explanation of the five stages of this cycle, see 39-41.
explain that this opportunity bubble lasts only a short time. If government leaders call for action too soon, the public may be in a state of shock and not ready for action. If they wait too long, people will be too detached and readjusted to no required sacrifices. Even later, people will often be critical of leadership’s failure to ask for commitment.\textsuperscript{18}

They use the response following the 11 September attack to illustrate the operation of the bubble. The American public’s readiness to take action and accept necessary sacrifices can be seen in the increase by over six standard deviations above the norm in the rate of voluntarism in the first three weeks after the attack. But the pace returned to its historical average after this three-week surge.\textsuperscript{19} Similarly, by 16 October 2001, donations for 9/11 relief reached one billion dollars.\textsuperscript{20} Additionally, in the aftermath of the attack, 60 percent of the public said they trusted the government in Washington “just about always/most of the time” – the first time in over 30 years that it reached that level.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{18} Fathali M. Moghaddam and James N. Breckenridge, “The Post-Tragedy ‘Opportunity-Bubble’ and the Prospect of Citizen Engagement,” \textit{Homeland Security Affairs} 7, 9/11 Essays (September 2011), \url{http://www.hsaj.org/?article=7.2.2} (accessed 27 September 2011). Moghaddam is professor, Department of Psychology and Director, Conflict Resolution Program, Department of Government, Georgetown University. Breckenridge is professor of psychology at Palo Alto University; Associate Director, Center for Interdisciplinary Policy, Education, and Research on Terrorism; and senior fellow at the Center for Homeland Security and Defense at the Naval Postgraduate School.


Within six months, the bubble had burst, and the government had lost the opportunity to engage the public. President Bush did call for some action. In his state of the union address of January 2002, he asked Americans to commit “at least two years – over 4,000 hours over the rest of your lifetime – to the service of your neighbors and your nation.” He also announced the creation of the USA Freedom Corps, focused on “three areas of need: responding in case of crisis at home; rebuilding our communities; and extending American compassion throughout the world.” However, these actions are very general, and there are no direct connections to responding to 9/11 or fighting the war on terror. In a 2008 survey conducted by Moghaddam and Breckenridge, almost two thirds of respondents said the government had not explained citizens’ roles in the war on terror, and 74 percent said the government had not explained what they needed to do to prepare for possible future terrorist acts.

The importance of understanding the opportunity bubble lies in recognizing there is, in fact, an opening to mobilize the country in response to crisis. Despite what has become in recent years a typically rather cynical and even distrustful attitude about the government, during crises, those doubts and negative feelings are overridden by a strong impulse to sacrifice and equally strong support for government leaders. Granted, there is the potential that government leaders would take the opportunity to gain popular

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24 Ibid., 3.
support for dubious policies. But if Congress, as the people’s representatives, fulfills its role as the counter balance to the executive branch, it can help minimize this danger. Moreover, the benefits of public engagement are such that government leaders should take advantage of these opportunity bubbles when possible.

The Future of Mobilizing for War

Once the impediments to thinking clearly about mobilization are identified and overcome, the most important factors in considering the future of mobilization for war become clear. Those factors are dependent on assumptions regarding the future forms of warfare the United States will likely encounter. For the purposes of this study, the following assumptions apply. First, US prosecution of the war on terror will continue, but with limited commitment of conventional forces. For the immediate future, the emphasis will be on intelligence gathering, covert operations conducted by the CIA and special operations forces, and law enforcement actions. Second, the United States will continue to see a need for military readiness focused on potential “hotspots,” in particular, possible conflict with Iran, North Korea, or China. Although military technology will continue to evolve, it is reasonable to assume that for the immediate future such conflicts would follow the same basic model as is current, i.e., using rapidly deployable, technology-dependent forces.

Mobilization of the Military

Given these assumptions, there are no meaningful changes to be anticipated in the nature of the military element of mobilization. Despite occasional calls for reinstating the draft or some modified concept of conscription, neither political and
military leaders nor the public are in favor of doing so.\textsuperscript{25} Beyond its political unpalatability, every such suggestion founders on the inability of proponents to explain exactly how a new draft law would work. Conscription is a tool of mass, industrialized warfare. Apart from the role of the Vietnam War in delegitimizing the draft in the United States, changes in warfare and society during the second half of the twentieth century have undermined both the utility of conscripted forces and the societal norms that led to them.\textsuperscript{26}

The concept of the armed services as just another segment of the labor market has replaced the ideal of the citizen-soldier, with emphasis on economic incentives for enlistment and quality-of-life considerations for retention. As a result, military service has been redefined as just another job and the citizen-soldier concomitantly redefined as a “pragmatic military professional who is willing to go to war.”\textsuperscript{27} (The rise of private defense contractors has reinforced this trend.) While 90 percent of the public express pride in the US armed forces and nearly 80 percent have “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in the military as an institution, just under half would recommend that a young person join the military.\textsuperscript{28} Additionally, both families and societal institutions


\textsuperscript{27} Segal, \textit{Recruiting}, 67, 74-6.

\textsuperscript{28} Since the late 1980s, the military has ranked highest in confidence among a list of 16 institutions (such as Congress, religion, big business, etc.). Taylor, \textit{War and Sacrifice}, 60, 61, 65.
often actively discourage young people from enlisting. In Maryland, for example, a law signed by Governor Martin O’Malley in April 2010 prohibits sending the scores of high school students who have taken the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery to military recruiters, unless the student specifically opts to do so.\textsuperscript{29} Decision makers must recognize, therefore, that this existing mobilization process puts a limit on the size of the force that can be raised and, consequently, the amount of military power that can be generated.\textsuperscript{30} Foreign policy decisions, national security strategy, and military planning should take into account both the capabilities and the limitations of the force.

**Mobilization of Economy and Industry**

Given the assumed form of conflict faced by the United States in the near-term future, significant changes in the nature of industrial/economic mobilization are also unlikely. The bureaucracy and economic power of the military-industrial complex is too firmly entrenched to envision any major restructuring. Even if such a restructuring were possible, it is difficult to imagine an alternative form of creating military material. Complex weapon systems and the rapid pace of technological change, as well as the ever-shifting military capabilities of potential enemies, require the continuous commitment of defense firms to research, improvements, and production. Additionally,

\textsuperscript{29} The ASVAB, although administered by the military, is used by many high school guidance counselors to advise students on general career choices. In the past, the scores were forwarded automatically to military recruiters unless students or schools specified that they not be sent. The vote in the Maryland House was 102-37 and in the Senate, 25-22. A sponsor of the bill, state Senator Jamie Raskin (D-Montgomery), described the vote as a “victory for the privacy of student information and the right of families to engage in decision-making.” Michael Birnbaum, “Md. Law Limits Military Recruitment of Students,” *Washington Post*, 15 April 2010, B5.

the US commitment to a free market ideology means those firms will be privately owned and motivated by profit. In an ideal world, this system of financing and production of military material would be subject to attentive oversight to curb the excesses that have become typical of the system, but it is unlikely that anyone will generate the political will to do so. Recognition of this basic continuity is not to suggest, however, that at least some changes in the nature of industrial and economic mobilization are not occurring or to be fostered.

Of particular significance is the continued reliance on private military corporations and other contractors to support US military operations, which began to gather momentum in the 1990s and shows no signs of abating. Indeed, if the US armed forces remain small relative to the expansive strategic commitments of the country (a likely circumstance given the ongoing discussions of significant budget cuts), the use of such contractors will continue to grow, whether desirable or not. These private contractors occupy a nexus between military and industrial mobilization, and their use is, in fact, a form of mobilization. This aspect of mobilization should also be subject to close regulation to prevent the fraud, profiteering, and other violations of law that have recently been all too common.

Consideration of future industrial/economic mobilization should emphasize the need for flexibility and responsiveness and strive for balance between efficiency and effectiveness. An industrial mobilization strategy designed as a “system of readiness” could help cultivate these qualities. Such a strategy differs from the industrial

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31 This point was highlighted by Deborah Avant during a panel discussion, “Ten Years after September 11: New Ways of Doing Business,” at the biennial international conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces & Society, Chicago IL, 22 October 2011.
mobilization plans of the 1930s in that the focus is not on shifting raw materials and production to the output of masses of military material. Rather, the focus would be on hedging against both the decline of US military supremacy and the possibility of spending billions on weapon systems that may not be useful when an actual threat materializes. A readiness system would emphasize “research and development, professional training, and organizational planning,” with the goal of deferring major increases in military production until existing US military supremacy starts to erode.\(^{32}\)

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the need for a more fiscally responsible form of economic mobilization in the future is paramount. In the short term, the existing approach to the war on terror is too expansive and expensive. As a result, it plays directly into Al Qaeda’s strategy, which is directed primarily at undermining the US economy.\(^{33}\) The budgeting challenges of the war on terror and the need for a sound fiscal strategy are not unique. The short-term focus of the Bush administration that led to major tax cuts and significant increases in domestic spending, added to the major increases in defense spending after 9/11, must be reexamined because the continuing impact is potentially catastrophic. A long-term fiscal perspective should strive for better balance between defense and domestic spending.\(^ {34}\)

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\(^{32}\) This idea is advanced by Richard K. Betts in “A Disciplined Defense: How to Regain Strategic Solvency,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 6 (November/December 2007): 73-4. Betts explains the utility of strategic hedging by noting that it would have done no good for the US to mobilize in the 1930s as, for example, it would likely have ended up with thousands of useless biplanes.


\(^{34}\) Hormats, *Price of Liberty*, 280-1, 282-3.
Mobilization of the Public

The future of public mobilization in the United States will be subject more to societal trends than to assumptions about the forms of future warfare. Any attempt to take advantage of “opportunity bubbles” and create an engaged public must recognize that motivations for political mobilization of any sort are subject to rapidly shifting social, political, and economic forces.35

The trends toward disengagement and disinterest highlighted in previous chapters have been and will continue to be reinforced by the disaggregation of traditional twentieth century concepts of society. Societal elites, such as business leaders, wealthy aristocrats, and media moguls, who in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries served as opinion leaders in reinforcing national norms, are now increasingly forming their own global communities. Transnational cultures, economic entities, and even military organizations all blur and break down traditional boundaries. As a result, “the sense of identity with and loyalty to the nation-state is ‘decomposed.’”36 These general changes in relationships and attitudes have led to a weakening of the nation-state as a political entity and as a dominant force in the lives of citizens. For example, Glenn Hutchins, the co-founder of a private equity firm, admits to defining his social and cultural links by “interests” and “activities,” and confirms that the people with whom he identifies “are

35 Rosenstone and Hansen, Mobilization, 232.

36 Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal, “Armed Forces after the Cold War,” in The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War, ed. Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams, and David R. Segal (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4-5.
much less place-based” than in the past. The common interests and experiences of these groups tie them closer to each other than to non-elites of their home countries.

Historian Daniel Rodgers takes this point a step further in identifying the final quarter of the twentieth century as a “great age of fracture” whereby notions of “society, history, and power” gave way to those of “individuals, contingency, and choice,” and “identities became fluid and elective.” One of the main effects of this great fracturing was the devolution of “society as nation.” He argues that while traditional symbols of nationalism, such as the American flag, remain powerful in some contexts, both liberal and conservative views of the evolution of society exhibit a retreat from nationalism into smaller visions of association. … The domain of citizenship, which had expanded in the post-World War II years … began to shrink. … The social contract shrunk imaginatively into smaller, more partial contracts: visions of smaller communities of virtue and engagement – if not communities composed simply of one rights-holding self.

A second major impulse that will influence the changing character of public mobilization is the role of networked communications technologies and social media. As has been true throughout history, often only a small group of activists provides the catalyst for and maintains the momentum of vast social changes (for example, the committees of correspondence prior to the American revolution). Today, social media increase the power and speed of such small groups. The Web Ecology Project found that a mere “handful” of people was responsible for the majority of Twitter activity that played a key role in post-election protests in Iran. Research has also shown that small

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numbers of people or even lone individuals can successfully infiltrate and influence social network groups.\textsuperscript{39}

However, the nature of these groups, coupled with the innumerable megabytes of information available on the worldwide web, tends to drive their members away from large, politically expansive causes and toward a focus on “micro-causes.”\textsuperscript{40} Farhad Manjoo has argued that the “rise of self-selecting media tribes has led to a decrease in ‘generalized trust’ but an increase in ‘particularized trust.’” People exhibit less faith in society writ large – the public en masse, the media, the government – but their trust in “small networks” continually increases.\textsuperscript{41}

The technologies of social media now allow small groups of social activists to achieve even greater economies of scale in mobilizing others. Cyber-security specialists in New Zealand found that computer-generated “social bots” could infiltrate a social network (in this case, Twitter) by mimicking the communications form of the network. Instead of a person or group of persons spending time infiltrating the targeted social network group, bots operate from large servers at little-to-no cost and can establish contact with thousands of people. Anyone from pro-democracy activists to government propagandists to insurgent revolutionaries could use such a tool.\textsuperscript{42}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{isaacson2011} Andy Isaacson, “Are You Following a Bot?” \textit{Atlantic} 307, no. 4, May 2011, 32.
\bibitem{manjoo2011} The events of the “Arab Spring” may contradict this assertion, but it is too soon and there has been too little research to judge one way or the other.
\bibitem{isaacson2011} Isaacson, “Are You Following a Bot,” 32. Isaacson notes that the infiltration process is aided by (or even dependent on) the information that people willingly place on the social networking site, which allows for accurate targeting and then fine-tuning of the influence campaign. Blogs are another possible avenue
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The obvious question arises as to whether the future of mobilizing the public for war can or should entail the use of these social networking techniques. While politicians are rapidly expanding their use for fund-raising and disseminating campaign messages, the prospects for effective use by central governments appear more problematic. In particular, because the social networking process is part of the fracturing of nation-state societies, it is difficult to envision how the same processes could be used to overcome those fractures. Government bureaucracies are notoriously ponderous, and the elements of society who would oppose the government’s message (whether on grounds of principle or politics) would seem to have the advantage in the “message cycle.”

Further, even if the government were to become adroit with social networking, doing so puts it at the top of a very slippery ethical slope, especially with tools like “social bots” readily available. In June 2010, for example, the US Air Force solicited bids for “Persona Management Software” designed to “create multiple fake identities that trawl social-networking sites to collect data on real people and then use that data to gain credibility and to circulate propaganda.” Without impugning the motivations behind this particular solicitation (presumably the propaganda targets were outside the United States), the implications are obvious. The temptation to engage in covert domestic propaganda, illegal infiltration of political opponents’ groups, or behind-the-scenes manipulation of images and “truth” poses a clear danger to civil liberties and democratic values. Strict oversight protocols would have to be created. This is not to


suggest that government agencies will be forever unable or should be forever prohibited from making use of these social networking tools. Rather, in the near term, those outside of government would seem to have the advantage in understanding and using these new methods.

There is another avenue, however, where social networking and other new communications technologies could play a useful role in creating and maintaining an engaged public. Rather than as tools of the government, they can serve as tools of the people to reengage in the process of going to war and sustaining the resulting military commitment. Citizens should play a role in restraining government decision makers, especially regarding decisions for war. To fulfill that role, they can make use of these new communications mechanisms, which not only provide a means to communicate but also a means to acquire information independent of the mass media and the government. However, while access to information is necessary, it is not sufficient merely to have access. Public opinion must be aggregated for “collective decision-making;” isolated individuals, however well informed, are not “the public.” For the public to reassert itself and influence government decisions, these communications mechanisms must be used by organized groups.44 While such actions are not emphasized within the traditional concept of mobilization, the act of “public oversight of legislative oversight of executive

oversight of a willingly accountable, self-policing military” is arguably a far more important form of public mobilization.

Final Thoughts

This work, with its breadth of analysis, naturally raises many possible topics for future study. Of these possibilities, there are three of particular interest and importance to the future of mobilizing for war in the United States.

The first of these topics is the increasing use of unmanned and robotic weapon systems, not only to aid soldiers on the battlefield but also to fight — eventually autonomously, in the minds of some prognosticators. The implications of this transition are significant from many perspectives, including that of mobilization, even without stepping into the science fiction world of robot armies fighting each other. Most importantly, the lack of engagement of the public in the nation’s wars can only be exacerbated if soldiers further evolve into technicians operating weapons from afar and encountering little if any risk while doing so. This model is in operation today with Predator drone pilots who control their planes from the Nevada desert and return home to their families when their “war shift” is over each day. An average person would be hard pressed to consider what form of mobilized act he or she would need to do to support such a warfighter.


The second important topic is cyber-war – specifically mobilizing societal resources to defend against and recover from a cyber attack. Cyber-war is, essentially, a conflict using the internet or other electronic means to disrupt a target. An attack could focus on “blinding” or interrupting standard military electronic systems, such as radar defenses or communications, to facilitate a primary attack by other means. Alternatively, it could focus on disrupting a nation’s electrical power infrastructure, causing nuclear power plants and other dangerous industrial facilities (such as oil refineries or chemical plants) to experience critical, catastrophic failures, or creating chaos within a financial market. Because skillful attackers would not be easily identifiable, traditional concepts of deterrence and retaliation are of little use, making defense against such attacks vitally important.

The nation of Estonia is leading the way in developing defensive concepts, and in doing so is illustrating a new model of mobilization. Estonia suffered a cyber attack on its media and financial networks in April 2007, later attributed to Russia. After that attack, the nation’s leaders created a Cyber Defense League comprising volunteer computer experts (software engineers, computer scientists, and programmers) who would be activated under the defense ministry in the event of another attack. In the meantime, they hone their skills through weekend exercises. Estonia has taken the lead in forming the NATO Cyber Defense Center for Excellence (established in May 2008), which the United States has joined as an official member as of 16 November 2011.47

Efforts to coordinate a similar private-government partnership in the United States have been less than successful due to a lack of trust among the parties and lack of a sense of real vulnerability, but recent experiments with other forms of cyber-mobilization have garnered intriguing results. In 2010, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) created a contest to “explore the roles the Internet and social networking play in the timely communication, wide-area team-building, and urgent mobilization required to solve broad-scope, time-critical problems.” The contest challenged participants to find ten, eight-foot red weather balloons moored at fixed locations in the continental United States. The balloons were visible from nearby roads and easily accessible. The first team (or individual) to submit all ten locations correctly would be the winner. DARPA had allotted two weeks for the competition. A team of five students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology completed the challenge with one hundred percent accuracy in less than nine hours. The winning team did not hear of the contest until four days before it began, and in less than two days, they created a plan, designed a website to manage the search, and enlisted 5,000 people to help.

In a similar manner, scientists engaged players of an online three-dimensional puzzle game called “Foldit” in building a model of a particular enzyme’s crystalline protein structure. The problem had stymied the scientists for over ten years; the game players solved the puzzle in ten days. What is particularly intriguing about this example

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is that the game players had no knowledge of chemistry, nor did they need it. The relevant chemical rules, i.e., how the proteins fit together, were incorporated into the rules of the game.\textsuperscript{50}

The possibilities for applying similar techniques to developing solutions to other discreet problems, including those related to mobilizing for cyber-war or other forms of conflict, are readily apparent. The team leader of the DARPA challenge winners suggested possible applications in helping police search for missing children or finding people with specific skills needed to respond to an emergency.\textsuperscript{51} In a similar manner, expertise might be mobilized to respond to a run-away nuclear reaction caused by a cyber-attack, for example.

The third topic of significance for future study, the concept of societal resilience, has been gaining in importance since the 11 September attack. A foremost analyst and proponent of this notion is Dr. Stephen Flynn, who defines resilience as the “capacity of individuals, communities, companies, and the government to withstand, respond to, adapt to, and recover from disasters.” He considers it imperative that the government mobilize civil society and the private sector to manage risks to the homeland by both defending against terrorism and taking action to recover from the inevitable attacks that will slip through those defenses.\textsuperscript{52} He emphasizes that building resilience must be an


\textsuperscript{51} Ford, “Ten Red Balloons,” 2. Of course, these methods assume that in the event of an attack on the US, the internet or some significant portion of it remains functional.

\textsuperscript{52} Stephen Flynn, “Recalibrating Homeland Security: Mobilizing American Society to Prepare for Disaster,” Foreign Affairs 90, no. 3 (May/June 2011): 130-1, 136. For details on how he envisions implementation of this process at the individual, community, and corporate levels, see 137-9. Flynn, the
open and bottom-up process, rather than being imposed from above. As such, it may have the “salutary effect of … [restoring] processes that enlist and strengthen civil society.” Because of this restorative potential, as well as the inevitability that the United States will face societal disasters, whether natural or the result of an enemy attack, the notion of resilience is the most useful perspective on how the concept of mobilization should evolve in the twenty-first century and is worthy of in-depth study.

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This work has highlighted the importance of a holistic understanding in creating policies and making decisions about mobilizing the country for war. The nation’s leaders and their advisers have not studied or thought clearly about this concept at least since the end of the Cold War. “Mobilization” as developed during the period of industrialized warfare is no longer applicable to current strategic realities. However, the minimalist approach that has developed over the latter years of the Cold War to the present day amounts to an abrogation of strategic responsibilities and, to a large degree, constrains the government’s strategic options. The broader vision presented here illuminates a new perspective on mobilization that can help overcome these deficiencies and lead to development of a mobilization concept that is useful to the United States, both now and in the future.

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