



Shadows of Arlington

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Abstract

The common perception that the root cause of US military caution and casualty aversion was the Vietnam War, is a falsehood. *Shadows of Arlington* introduces the supposition that the roots of US Casualty Aversion (USCA) and its principles of defence and protection are rooted in the founding of the nation. Incorporated into the following chapters and three case studies is a review of the research processes, which combined an examination of US strategic culture, its elite socialisation and their relationship to conducting statecraft. Furthermore, this thesis required a step away from scholarly convention by incorporating the autobiography as a pertinent primary resource. A complete account of US strategic culture should consider that it is founded upon a principle of defence and caution; and that USCA is deeply-embedded and subtle within its culture and elite socialisation processes. It is important to note, this thesis author is not merely saying its citizens tend to be casualty averse; rather that USCA has been so deeply embedded that it has gone unnoticed whilst it's been implicitly implemented, been dismissed or mistakenly identified.

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Chapter 1: Introduction, Structure & Methodology

Introduction

“America may be a country founded in revolution, but we've never been a warrior culture.”¹ This statement was made on November 11, 2007, by Vice President Dick Cheney whilst attending Arlington National Cemetery in observance of Veteran's Day. It may be considered ironic that this claim was made by one of the most influential proponents of two of United States' most controversial wars; in fact, Vice-President Dick Cheney was correct.

In the large volume of scholarly literature written about the United States' (US) foreign policy, there is a prevalent suggestion that the US is a belligerent and imperialistic nation; however, this is a limited view. A more complete account of the United States' military role in the world would reveal that the US has a tendency to be drawn into periods of external military intervention followed by periods of caution, whilst pursuing diplomacy and foreign policies to avoid military confrontation. It would also note that US society does not sit well with the idea of war, and its people are extremely reluctant to incur US military casualties. The research process asked, why?

This thesis states:

- The roots of US Casualty Aversion (USCA) can be found in the ideas of the Founding Fathers.
- The Vietnam War was not the cause of US casualty aversion and military caution because USCA can be traced back to historical junctures prior to US involvement.
- The United States' strategic culture is founded upon a principle of defence and caution.
- And, USCA is deeply embedded and theoretically anchored in the United States' strategic culture.

Furthermore, the following chapters and three case studies demonstrate:

- That no single document has provided a complete and consistent explanation of why and how USCA is deeply embedded within US strategic culture; and the subtle relationship between the two.
- And, why the socialisation an elite citizen should be acknowledged in the theory of strategic culture, as it will have influenced their conduct and consequently, its impact on state policy and military outcomes.

¹ Vice President D. Cheney, *Remarks on Veteran's Day*, Arlington National Cemetery. 11/11/07.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/11/print/20071111.html> [Accessed 03/11/2008].

It is important for the reader to note that when this thesis states that US Casualty Aversion (USCA) forms part of the United States' strategic culture, this thesis author is not merely saying its citizens tend to be casualty averse; rather that USCA has been so deeply embedded into US socialisation processes', culture and ultimately its strategic culture, that it has gone unnoticed, been dismissed or mistakenly identified.

USCA is not a new concept. Its discreet cultural and historical patterns have, however, prevented scholars in forming a complete understanding of it. Often, USCA has been uniquely attributed to specific instances in US history. For example, it has received a variety of titles, notably 'the Vietnam Syndrome'. Further analysis of the events and phenomena behind each of these terms exposes a core theme: an aversion to US casualties. Therefore, when the term 'USCA' is consistently applied in place of other guises and titles, a clarity presents itself which has previously been overlooked.

Furthermore, this thesis advocates that to understand a nation's strategic culture, an in-depth exploration of its history and foreign policy decisions is required. Equally as important is an examination of a nation's elite citizens with a particular focus on their personal narrative and socialisation process. Reviewing an individual's socialisation provides a variety of information, for example their values, standards of behaviour, and moral codes. It also indicates which values are more prevalent within a particular society or nation. For instance, in the United States, education forms an element of its primary socialisation and its education system reinforces the principles of citizenship, state, and country.

Similarly, this thesis notes that USCA is a learnt response, developed and maintained through socialisation processes. USCA reflects the values of the United States' founding members, who considered war to be a policy of last resort. Consequently, restrictions were placed within its political system and written into its constitution to prevent a warrior culture developing.

This thesis did consider the inevitable exceptions to this thinking; including those instances when the United States has become embroiled in military action. Importantly, if this thesis had not broadened its research to include reviews of elite US citizens and their socialisation, the subtle implementations of USCA would have remained incomplete and so too would an understanding of an important element of the United States' strategic culture.

US Casualty Aversion Defined

Casualty aversion can appear in many forms, “ranging from a provisional hesitance to sacrifice one’s own forces to an unequivocal refusal to harm even one’s foes.”² This range (detailed in Chapter 2), has in turn created a variety of terms and definitions. Nonetheless, primarily “a universally accepted precise meaning for casualty aversion has remained elusive.”³ Previous contributions worthy of mention:

- Thomas M. Kane stated that “casualty aversion is the reluctance to accept risk, suffering and destruction in activities such as war. There are many reasons why one might experience such reluctance, ranging from strategic calculation to ethical principle.”⁴
- Evan A. Huelfer referred to “the ‘casualty issue’– an acute avoidance of losing men in battle.”⁵
- Robert Mandel noted that casualty aversion was commonly known as ‘casualty avoidance’, which he defined as a “dread, minimization, sensitivity, or phobia- operationally means that during warfare one has a low tolerance for losing many lives or suffering many injuries.”⁶ He added that there was also “an unwillingness by the political and military leadership to place the American military in a position of danger, even to the exclusion of accomplishing policy aims.”⁷

To provide clarity and overcome any ambiguities and inconsistencies resulting from terms and definitions previously used in conjunction with USCA; for the purpose of this thesis the following are defined as:

- US Casualty Aversion (USCA): a culturally and politically driven reluctance to engage in military operations which may cause significant casualties to one’s own forces.
- US Casualty: a member of the US armed forces lost in service due to loss of life or injuries sustained during war, their capture, sickness, or because their whereabouts or condition being undetermined.

Thirty years have now passed since a select group of scholars started a process of reviewing the Vietnam Syndrome and the United States casualty issue. In the wider scholarly community, the

² T. M. Kane, *Casualty Aversion Definition* [email] to Charlotte E. Fenton, 25 June 2014, 19:04.

³ R. Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War* (London: Lynne Rienner Publications, Inc. 2004), 8.

⁴ T. M. Kane, *Casualty Aversion Definition* [email].

⁵ E.A. Huelfer, *The “Casualty Issue” in American Military Practice* (Westport Connecticut, London: Praeger Publishers. 2003), ix.

⁶ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

established consensus was that since the end of World War Two, Western culture and societies have become less resilient and more averse to casualties in war and this was significantly felt during the American military operation in Vietnam. In turn, a perception formed among the United States' allies and enemies that since the conclusion of the Vietnam War the US public has been unwilling to commit its troops to military operations if the risk to its troops was deemed too high. In addition, following events in peacekeeping operations in the early 1990s, notably Operation Restore Hope (Somalia 1992-1993), reluctance to lose lives in combat was increased.

Such perceptions were not enthusiastically embraced by some sections of US society, in particular the military. For example, in 2000 C.K. Hyde wrote: "Because of our casualty aversion, in the eyes of the world, we are becoming 'a sawdust superpower'."⁸ Robert Mandel, in 2004, observed the casualty issue and its definition as being, one which is "murky,"⁹ adding: "The idea of victory without casualties among one's own citizenry can be extremely appealing in democracies with a narrow sense of national interest."¹⁰ Mandel also highlighted concerns over "an unwillingness by the political and military leadership to place the American military in a position of danger, even to the exclusion of accomplishing policy aims."¹¹ USCA continues to provoke internal debates, resistance, reluctance, and reflection in US society and remains a cross-party issue, with unlikely political alliances being formed. This is partly due to the misuse and misunderstanding of associated terms such as 'the Vietnam Syndrome,' which frequently re-emerge in the media, especially when the use of US military action is under consideration. At the centre of many of these internal objections is a perception of weakness and statements of shame, which may account for why USCA has not been examined in the depth and detail it deserves.

In no way does this thesis suggest that the United States' aversion to its own casualties is a weakness, as it can be considered a noble quest to protect its own troops and as Thomas M. Kane noted: "Any rational commander must attempt to spend military assets economically, and anyone with a trace of compassion must experience some level of casualty aversion in its broader forms. Nevertheless, excessive or misplaced casualty aversion can compromise political and military policy

⁸ C.K. Hyde, 'Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policy Makers and senior Military Officers,' *Aerospace Power Journal* (2000), 17-27: 18.

⁹ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

makers' ability to act in timely and effective ways.”¹² Thus, this thesis purely seeks to understand and assess USCA’s impact on US strategic culture.

Structure

This thesis contains eight chapters and three case studies:

- ‘*In the Hearts and Minds of the People*’ (Chapter 4).
- ‘*Vietnam: The US Experience*’ (Chapter 5).
- ‘*Adrift*’ (Chapter 6).

Following this structural outline, included in this chapter is a concise methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review, is a comprehensive review of literature to establish the originality of this thesis. It shows that no single document has provided a consistent explanation of how and why USCA is deeply embedded within US society and its strategic culture. Instead, this modest collection of literature demonstrates a supposition that since the end of World War Two, Western culture and societies became less resilient and more averse to casualties in war and this was significantly felt during the United States' military operation in Vietnam. Reflecting the chronological development of this literature there are two phases, beginning with the early contributors, John Mueller, George C. Herring, following the Vietnam War and more recently, Andrew Priest in phase two. They also identified the Vietnam War as being the first extreme reaction by US society to US casualties, and supported a broader assumption that the United States is a bellicose nation by characterising casualty aversion as an anomalous response to specific events such as Vietnam, Somalia and Iraq, and furthermore, cited the Vietnam Syndrome alongside terms and analogies such as the Somalia Syndrome, Force Protection and Iraq Syndrome.

Chapter 3: Strategic Culture Reviewed, demonstrates why culture is too important to dismiss. Both culture and strategic culture are examined and defined. Seizing the opportunity to develop Colin Gray’s observation that “individuals do count, even in the politics of security at the highest level”¹³ and Jack Snyder’s comment (1977) that the “distinctively Soviet mode of strategic thinking”¹⁴ included “a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and [behavioural] patterns” formed in the Soviet Union’s socialisation. This chapter details why it is important to extend the scope of the theory to

¹² T. M. Kane, *Casualty Aversion Definition* [email].

¹³ C.S. Gray, *The Sheriff: America’s Defense of the New World Order* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 48.

¹⁴ J.L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations* (Santa Monica: RAND report-R2154-AF, 1977), v.

include the elite individual's socialisation, as this inclusion allows a researcher to harness a deeper insight into how and why their experiences as a prevalent influencer have influenced policy and decision-making processes and ultimately providing a proficient review of its strategic culture.

A review of the United States' strategic culture and the socialisation of its elite citizens demonstrates how deeply and subtle the traits of USCA are intertwined within US culture and society. Using subsections, for example 'Free of Press & Speech and Accountability Review and Improvement', which identify and summarise the specific traits and components of US strategic culture, which were influenced by and built upon a foundation of USCA. From the founding of the United States, its elite citizens have consistently influenced their nation's overarching strategic culture and unknowingly embedded a subtle intolerance to its own casualties, which remained deeply embedded and unnoticed until the mid-twentieth century, when specific consequences of the Vietnam War highlighted this issue to the wider population. Overall, this provides an account of how US strategic culture and USCA are interwoven. Additionally, this thesis acknowledges that the mentioned cultural traits and components are not necessarily unique to US strategic culture. It should also be noted that the permanence of USCA and culture must not be conflated with the occasional shifts in a society's behavioural patterns.

Chapter 4: The Origins of US Casualty Aversion, this chapter looks at the beginnings of the US nation to examine the cultural influences and socialisation of the founding fathers to provide a deeper understanding of USCA and how it can be traced back to this period. The case study, *'In the Hearts and Minds of the People'*, provides a brief assessment of some critical junctures in US history, beginning with its foundation and turning to the Civil War (1861-1865), to place the decisions of elite citizens into a historical context. This is not a new account and nor does it intend to be. Instead, this chapter serves to show the link between the values, beliefs and culture of the founding fathers and how these have been translated into foreign policy and the wider culture of the United States, with an emphasis on nation and citizen. To provide a richer understanding, historical examples are presented to show the embedding of these important guiding principles and how cultural traits have developed and continued to influence US society and body politic. Implementations of casualty aversion by elite citizens are highlighted.

The latter part of the chapter examines the United States' late military involvement in World War One; the terrible loss of life and strategic failures while examining the 'never again' approach adopted by many of the political elite and wider society. This ultimately led to the United States'

most documented period of isolation. There was a significant reluctance within the United States to be drawn into another European war; the America First campaign drew together citizens from all political backgrounds, including those with elite influence within the politic. This section also demonstrates the overt and implicit implementation of casualty aversion concluding during World War Two.

Chapter 5: Reluctant Warriors: Implicit Implementation of USCA. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the subtle implementations and discreet practices of USCA during the Cold War era and to dispel the myth that USCA developed solely as a response to the US experience during the Vietnam War. Beginning with a short review of the United States' diplomatic and military actions in Korea (1950-1953), it highlights the lessons of the military experience in Korea, which account for why the United States initially remained reluctant to send troops to Vietnam.

Following discussions with senior scholars, it was agreed that a review of the sources and research related to the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War would serve as a valuable scholarly contribution, examining cultural characteristics and behavioural traits presented by elite citizens and, unlike past reviews, revealing any overt or implicit implementations of USCA. These findings are presented in the first case study, *'Vietnam: The US Experience'*, which highlights the assimilation of USCA into mainstream politics, hastened by the development of the Vietnam Syndrome.

Chapter 6 Reluctant Warriors: Overt Implementation of USCA. Contained within this chapter is a review of the United States' diplomatic and military engagements between 1975 and 2017, demonstrating how USCA was overtly advocated, implemented and ingrained further into US strategic culture by its people; examples are provided. Also included are details relating to the work undertaken by several elite citizens; to name a few: Casper Weinberger, Colin Powell, and Jimmy Carter. The case study, *'Adrift'*, specifically re-examines two historical events: the collapse of the Soviet Union and the September 11 terrorist attacks; while highlighting significant foreign policy decisions in the interim years. Despite the differences between these two historical events, both of them shifted public opinion towards subsequent international participation in military and humanitarian operations. Consequently, a new generation were exposed to the significant consequences of warfare, along with their society's deeply embedded aversion to casualties, causing popular opinion to favour and result in a return to cautious foreign policies. Yet, despite the significance of these two events and changes within US society, the United States' strategic culture remained unchanged. In summary, the purpose of this chapter is to show how the United States

further ingrained USCA into its socialisation process; and how its elite citizens continued to overtly implement USCA from the conclusion of the Vietnam War in 1975, through to 2017 when President Obama completed his second term.

Chapter 7: Conclusion. This thesis concludes: USCA is not a specific reaction to a previously failed military operation or war. Rather, it is implicitly intertwined within US strategic culture. Since independence, USCA has been an implicit element of US strategic culture and will remain so. USCA has been ingrained into US culture through socialisation processes and elite citizens, it will continue to place US citizens first when conducting foreign and defence policy.

Methodology

Carl Von Clausewitz wrote: “Theory exists so that one need not start afresh each time sorting out the material and [ploughing] through it, but will find it ready to hand and in good order.”¹⁵ Colin S. Gray provided a substantially large volume of content for the theory of strategic culture, and this thesis acknowledges the concerns raised by Gray in his 2007 paper ‘*Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture*’. Below is a selection of Gray’s opinions on designing a method of research for work contributing to the theory of strategic culture:

- “We should not take our definitions or our theories too seriously. A little theory goes a long way; more often than not it goes too far.”¹⁶
- We should be cautious of the “methodological bog.”¹⁷
- Though it is important to have a rigorous method for conducting research it should not take “precedence over an inconvenient reality.”¹⁸
- The “scholarly challenge presented by strategic culture resides primarily in the highly resistant nature of the subject, rather than with deficiencies in our research.”¹⁹
- Strategists “lost touch with political variety and change,”²⁰ whilst pursuing the demand for “rigor and precision.”²¹

¹⁵ C. von. Clausewitz, M. Howard and P. Paret (eds. trans), *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976, paperback ed. 1984), 141.

¹⁶ C.S. Gray, ‘Out of the Wilderness: Prime time for Strategic Culture,’ *Comparative Strategy*, 26, 1, (2007), 1-20: 16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁸ Gray, ‘Out of the Wilderness: Prime time for Strategic Culture’, 1-20: 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-20: 16.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-20: 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1-20: 3.

- Strategists allowed the construction of theory to “triumph over the substance of the subject.”²²

This thesis noted Gray’s observation that culture and methodology are “severely at odds”²³ with each other and the theory of strategic culture is difficult to design and quantify, because culture, warfare and strategy “cannot be reduced to a quantifiable problem,”²⁴ because all three do not “yield to the scientific method.”²⁵ Additionally, “unpicking a decision, deconstructing a strategy and style in warfare, for clear evidence of cultural footprints, is always going to be a contestable endeavor.”²⁶ Gray recognised his observations were “methodologically devastating,”²⁷ though true.

Significantly, Gray asserted:

- “It does not in any way detract from the proposition that cultural matters are vitally important.”²⁸
- “Our institutions, and our processes of governance, have been shaped, at least influenced, by what we understand as culture.”²⁹
- We are all encultured and “everything that we think strategically, and that subsequently we seek to do for strategic reasons, may be influenced by the cultural dimension.”³⁰
- We should not forget the “narrative or the plot and why we are talking about it.”³¹

The United States narrative was reviewed in reaction to Gray’s methodological advice, to establish if there were any trends linked to USCA, while incorporating the view of Richard Holbrooke that good diplomacy requires knowing the small details about participants, such as their “anecdotes and the personal background of the participants”³² and that they are “integral to the story”³³ and to finding a solution. This review demonstrated the benefits of considering elite individuals’

²² Ibid., 1-20: 3.

²³ Ibid., 1-20: 1.

²⁴ Ibid., 1-20: 16.

²⁵ Ibid., 1-20: 1.

²⁶ Ibid., 1-20: 14.

²⁷ Ibid., 1-20: 14.

²⁸ Ibid., 1-20: 14.

²⁹ Ibid., 1-20: 14.

³⁰ Ibid., 1-20: 17.

³¹ Ibid., 1-20: 17.

³² R. Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998), xv.

³³ Ibid., xv.

experiences, opinions and socialisation to gain a fuller insight into how USCA became deeply embedded in US culture and society.

Brené Brown suggested in her research that “stories are data with a soul.”³⁴ Brown, also a US citizen, focussed her data collection on sources in the United States and observed: “We can’t control behavior of individuals; however, we can cultivate organizational cultures where behaviors are not tolerated and people are held accountable for protecting what matters most: human beings.”³⁵

Brown’s findings certainly resonated with the ideas in this research. Brown had worked within the parameters of grounded theory (B. Glaser & A. Strauss, 1967), developing theories based on people’s “lived experiences rather than proving or disproving existing theories.”³⁶ She summarised Fred Kerlinger’s (behavioural researcher) approach to grounded theory as being “a set of interrelated constructs or concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena.”³⁷ Its methods provided useful recommendations for this process, for example beginning with a topic rather than the hypothesis or a literature review, and developing a theory as the scholar examines how and where it fits in the literature.

Grounded theory also highlighted the importance of qualitative and comparative research; it provided suggestions for ways to examine a narrative of an elite US citizen and contributed to understanding how a “literature review is actually a literature analysis and it is not separate from the research but is a continuation of the process.”³⁸ Following a period of careful consideration, this research was constructed using the theory of strategic culture.

Initially this research process considered:

- Firstly, why does the United States keep returning to cautious foreign policies following military intervention?
- Secondly, reviewing the literature from a select cohort of scholars whose writing referenced at least one of the following: Vietnam Syndrome, Iraq Syndrome and a new “American” way of war (contributions are reviewed in Chapter 2).

³⁴ B. Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead* (London: Penguin Books Ltd. 2012), 252.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 196

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 252.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 252-253.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 259.

In summary, previous explanations had recalled prominent assumptions which suggested the United States' casualty averse culture was a symptom of the unintended consequences of the Vietnam War and its lingering internal political discourse between its interventionists and isolationists.

However, these assumptions were lacking a fully considered review and did not provide a complete explanation. For example, as detailed later in this thesis, there are earlier historical occurrences of elite US citizens asserting and implementing restraint and caution in foreign policy decisions and the conduct of military intervention; with the defence of the nation and in exceptional cases its allies being deemed the only necessary justification for military action. On completion of a literature review and an appraisal of strategic culture (Chapter Three), further research time was allocated to broaden the chronological timeline; to provide a wider context to help demonstrate why the United States implemented particular foreign policies.

A selection of elite citizen's narratives were also reviewed. The original chronological timeline (mid-twentieth century to the close of President Obama's administration) was adjusted to include the Civil War, with a further adjustment to include the founding of the United States. These adjustments provided further case study material and additional clarification on the existence of "cultural patterns and ideas that permeate society,"³⁹ which included the United States' cycles of military intervention followed by its withdrawal, and further examples of the subtle and overt traits of USCA being implemented and the consequences.

Case Study

Each case study contributes to an overall study of USCA, each explaining when and how USCA emerged, and why and how USCA was implemented. Included in each are:

- A review of a particular historical event.
- A summary of USCA being implemented in policy and statecraft.
- Relevant information on elite U.S. citizens and their socialisation.

Primary Sources

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of why and how USCA is embedded within US strategic culture and linked to its citizens, priority for assembling and reviewing sources was given to primary

³⁹ G.K. Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington: Smithsonian Books. 1995), 9.

source documentation, because as scholars we are trained to be “addicted to ‘primary’ sources.”⁴⁰ This process also considered Gray’s observations that policy and strategy are constructed at ‘home’ and “embedded in the culture of a domestic context”⁴¹ Equally pertinent was the collection of sources which provided data on narratives and socialisation of US elite citizens, who assisted in shaping statecraft and strategic policy. Primary sources which are included:

- Government online archives.
- Documents and reports published by international organisations, for example the United Nations.
- Department of State (DOS), including: Factsheets: The Secretary’s remarks and speeches (received emails).
- Presidential speeches: remarks and policy updates of both President Bush and President Obama, as well as from their respective administrations (received emails from the White House communications team).
- Autobiographies and memoirs, which were considered as a primary source; one example being *Fighting for Peace* by Caspar Weinberger.
- Personal and private correspondence of elite citizens: Published diary entries and letters are included because they are “intensely human documents, testimony of a time”⁴² and provide information and small details about an individual’s socialisation. Collections were carefully considered and curated by scholars who had ensured “all letters have been reproduced faithfully,”⁴³ and attested to their authenticity. An example, John F. Kennedy’s letters, were a valuable collection as they contained his “earliest and clearest explanations of his positions and feelings on such matters as religion, civil rights, nuclear arms testing, and Vietnam.”⁴⁴

Autobiographies

The autobiography is considered as a primary source in this thesis. Indubitably, the use of an autobiography as a credible primary source is contentious. However, after considering a variety of realistic and limiting restrictions, a decision was taken to include these valuable sources for

⁴⁰ J.W. Dower, *Cultures of War* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc. 2010), xxxv.

⁴¹ C.S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson. 2005), 90.

⁴² M. W. Sandler, (ed.), *The Letters of John F. Kennedy*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2013), xi.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁴⁴ Sandler, *The Letters of John F. Kennedy*, xi.

examining the individual's narrative and socialisation process: their experiences, reflections and opinions.

Access to interviews with elite citizens was also an unrealistic endeavour; national security matters being one reason given and if permission were gained, restrictive, tight and changeable schedules would have made the obtaining of an interview logistically difficult. A further consideration was the historical timeline of this thesis, since a number of elite citizens are now in the later stages of their lives and a large proportion are already deceased. Rather than dismiss this avenue of research, the decision was made to continue examining their 'story' and socialisation by collecting data in a considered and methodical way from their autobiographies.

Pertinent data collected from autobiographies (to varying degrees):

- Family ancestry and childhood (primary socialisation).
- Values and religion.
- Education.
- Cultural influences.
- Opinions on country, society and communities.
- Critical experiences i.e., trauma or service to the country in military/political office.

Generally, autobiographies provide information about the author's childhood (primary socialisation) and significant experiences that occurred in their formative years, for example their time at university or time serving in the military. Although there are exceptions, autobiographies written by US elites have provided very detailed accounts of their time serving the United States. Having been encouraged not to share their personal opinions whilst in office, their autobiographies become an outlet for them to reflect, justify and provide additional context to their policy decisions. Casper Weinberger certainly valued his opportunity to present his account. In his introduction of *Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years at the Pentagon* he wrote: "this history will be shaped by my own beliefs, experiences and training, it will differ from accounts by others... most of which are... second-hand accounts."⁴⁵ More importantly, Weinberger's autobiography highlighted a pertinent yet simple point: "My account will differ primarily from these other versions of these events because... I was there."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ C. Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years at the Pentagon* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd. 1990), 12.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

Reading these personal accounts and materials provides small, yet significant examples of subtle traits of USCA being implemented and segments of useful information, which had previously not been deemed relevant. Autobiographies provide data on individuals not found in the official records or in other literacy sources.

For example, contemporary press reports considered President George W. Bush to be an 'interventionist', having led the United States into two major conflicts. Condoleezza Rice's autobiography provided details of her observations in the days leading up to these events, and reflected on the President's demeanour during his deliberations, and when making his judgements to implement US military force. Rice reflected: "You come to see that being President is a very lonely job... at no time is that truer than when the Commander in Chief orders American men and women into battle... the President acknowledges that he, and he alone, is responsible for that decision."⁴⁷

These small references contribute to an overall understanding of whether or not elite individuals implemented policy recommendations influenced, either knowingly or unknowingly, by their own casualty aversion. Furthermore, the subtext should not be overlooked, because as Evan A. Huelfer also noted, USCA and its many terms i.e., "sensitivity to casualties" are not always "directly stated in the speeches and writings."⁴⁸

Bias: Despite the intent to seek clarity on personal traits, experiences and socialisation linked to USCA, this research process was required to consider the existence of bias in sources which were reviewed, especially those extracted from written personnel accounts. Particular attention was given to bias in autobiographies, as it is inevitable these sources would include a degree of bias. For example, an individual's political affiliation may cause an overly critical response and a distorted version of events. The fact that people are often inclined to look back and consider that they 'knew it all along', otherwise known as the hindsight bias, also became a consideration:

What the beholder of the past is inclined to recognize as having been the real and rationally ascertainable part of human experience may have been to those whose [lives] he is reviewing inconsequential or unreal. Conversely, what today's historian tends to regard as a myth, or as a figment of the imagination unrelated to the facts of life that he has uncovered,

⁴⁷ C. Rice, *No Higher Honour: A memoir of my years in Washington* (London: Simon Schuster UK Ltd. 2011), 205.

⁴⁸ Huelfer, *The "Casualty Issue" in American Military Practice*, xiii.

may in its time have been experienced as the ultimate reality.⁴⁹

To overcome this potential bias, each document was analysed with the specific intent of identifying biases; no statement was considered to be a fact without thorough analysis, and if any form of bias was identified, it was brought to the attention of the reader.

A unique primary source: This thesis author was privileged to have had a small amount of email correspondence with Colin S. Gray during the research process. During his lifetime, Gray spent a considerable amount of his scholarly life working and developing the theory of strategic culture, and as a practitioner he worked as an advisor to President Ronald Reagan's administration for five years on the President's General Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament, and was an advisor on a variety of international forums as well as founding the National Institute for Public Policy. His personal experiences of working within the political elite framework and of using their processes of decision making, provided a unique insight. Gray generously offered a few thoughts on this thesis topic in relation to his time spent working in the Reagan administration and kindly agreed for these to be included. Whilst reading this thesis, it is important to remember that Gray's literature consistently stated:

- "Strategic culture is not only 'out there', it is also within us: we, our institutions, and our behaviour are in the context."⁵⁰
- International politics "is rarely *about* culture, but it is always conducted by people who are the products of their local cultural context. That context will influence how they think about war and peace."⁵¹
- "Individuals do count, even in the politics of security at the highest level."⁵²
- US "foreign and defence policy must succeed in domestic politics before they can be exercised against outsiders."⁵³
- "The domestic political, social, and cultural context is the playing field on which policy struggles, personality clashes, and budgetary battles are waged."⁵⁴

⁴⁹ A. B. Bozeman, *Politics & Culture in International History*, 2nd edition (New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers. 2004), 12.

⁵⁰ C. S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999), 133.

⁵¹ Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 93.

⁵² Gray, *The Sheriff*, 48-49.

⁵³ C. S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 90.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

- “Future warfare is, of course, a story of potential strife among different security communities.”⁵⁵

Secondary Sources

David Reynolds wrote: “Like all historians, I stand on the shoulders of others.”⁵⁶ It could be said that as citizens of our countries, we stand on the shoulders of others, since our cultures and beliefs are passed down from one generation to the next.

Due to the geographical location of where the research by the author was undertaken, the now established and accepted academic research tool of the Internet was essential for gathering research and information. The ‘democratic’ nature of the internet is a very desirable attribute and has contributed much towards its growth. However, the validity and accuracy of information online can vary widely. Sometimes, even extremely high-ranking websites which specifically serve to provide information encourage users to upload and modify content without specific mechanisms for checking accuracy. With certain websites, however, it was in fact possible to rely on posted information. An example is use of the United States’ Presidential speeches and remarks from the official White House website. Other trusted websites included those of NATO, the United Nations, the European Union and other Government departments of the United States.

Additionally, for the purpose this research, the following non-comprehensive list provides an indication of resources that were utilised: books; online journals and periodicals; paper-based articles from journals and periodicals (not all journals have not been created in an electronic format); websites; transcripts of interviews with senior White House Staff members, as well as with key military figures and with Presidents of the United States; newspaper articles; and biographies. Each provided small fragments which helped to form this thesis.

Beginning with a review of literature, the process first examined the body of research on Vietnam Syndrome, which was a significant starting place because it allowed for new ideas to develop and directed the scope of the research, leading to other areas of literature, including the theory of strategic culture and casualty aversion. A detailed search of on-line journals and periodicals was carried out, accessing *International Peacekeeping*, *International Affairs*, *Foreign Affairs* and *Survival*, to name a few; each of which presented scholarly papers of relevance as far back as 1984. By

⁵⁵ Ibid., 90.

⁵⁶ D. Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt’s America and the origins of the Second World War* (Chicago, IVAN R. DEE, The American Ways Series. 2001), 10.

compiling a catalogue of relevant electronic journal and periodical papers, further sources of literature for research presented themselves as well as scholars and authors bibliographies and further suggested reading lists. Care was taken and attention was given to the nature of their sources. In the current climate of mass media, information is being generated with questionable origins and without rigorous academic practice. To ensure quality within the research being presented, the sources reviewed were carefully selected. This resulted in the realisation of how limited the volume of literature was linked directly to Vietnam Syndrome and casualty aversion. Generally, the research process was successful, with a number of these papers and articles appearing within the thesis as points of reference.

Throughout this work, the author distinguishes between those who write with a scholarly status and those of a non-scholarly background because documents were examined which may not be deemed scholarly in their nature, yet did have a valuable and important place within the wider culture of the United States. These sources included a range of media such as articles and books written by influential journalists because:

[a] correspondent learns – ought to learn – that his dispatches are temporal, limited and perishable, as benefits of his trade. This is not to suggest, however, that his observations are necessarily superficial. If journalism is history written under pressure, as Macaulay said, it can also serve as the first draft of history. As a journalist turned historian, I have tried to combine the skills of both crafts.⁵⁷

Also included are political documentaries produced by mainstream media organisations such as the BBC, and film documentaries. Ken Burns' award-winning film on the Civil War provided a significant cultural response to the debate on the Civil War. These types of available sources developed an understanding of the cultural context in which political decisions were made and how US society has developed. An interesting example is John Kerry speaking about Ken Burns' project on Vietnam:

I am absolutely more than confident that the extraordinary time and the passion that has consumed this particular project means the final product is not only going to be a work of art... it's going to be the definitive examination of Vietnam, with profound impact not only

⁵⁷ S. Karnow, *Vietnam A History*, 3rd edition, (London: PIMLICO, 1994), xii.

on the way that America thinks about that war, but I think on America's engagement with the issue of war itself. And I think it will do so for the better.⁵⁸

Summary

This thesis is based on the premise that in the United States it is the citizens that form the nation state and they are awarded elite positions through democratic processes. Overall, this thesis presents its reader with a unique and refreshing approach to understanding why the United States conducts itself in the international arena in the way that it does.

Each of the seven these chapters are crafted to incorporate detailed examinations of the United States' polity, society, culture and foreign policy at important US historical moments combined with an in-depth examination of influential elite citizen's socialisation processes, and their decisions. This is to establish where cultural traits and patterns have been passed from one generation to the next in US society, within its socialisation processes, and to enable comparative evaluations to be undertaken. It is important to understand diverse narratives, and this thesis includes both the narrative of the state and of the elite individuals. It also demonstrates where its cautious approach to foreign policy and casualty-averse society originated, became embedded, and how it is maintained through the elite US citizen.

The thesis is drawn together from a variety of primary and secondary sources that have been fully considered and evaluated; and it is important to note that the autobiography is recognised as a primary source. Furthermore, the method of using case studies proved to be an asset. There are three case studies included: 'In the Hearts and Minds of the People' (Chapter 4), 'Vietnam: The US Experience' (Chapter 5) and 'Adrift' (Chapter 6). Each demonstrated the subtle emergence and growth of USCA in the culture, the society, and the strategic culture of the United States; and explained how elite citizens often unknowingly implemented and sustained USCA in their policies and statecraft.

This project was at times testing, the very nature of strategic culture raises certain challenges for the implementation of methodology, since the characteristics of strategic culture are difficult to quantify. However, this work highlights significant points within the United States' strategic culture that have in the past not been fully explored to their full potential and methods within the theory of strategic culture.

⁵⁸ J. Kerry, *Secretary's Remarks: Remarks at the Vietnam War Summit and Conversation with Ken Burns*, (LBJ Presidential Library at the University of Texas at Austin, April 27, 2016). U.S. State Department [Email] 1 May 2016.

Moving forward it is important to remember that this thesis is not merely stating that elite US citizens tend to be casualty averse. Rather, USCA is so deeply embedded in the United States' strategic culture that it has gone unnoticed, dismissed, or mistakenly identified.

Chapter 2: The Literature Review

This review focuses on two historical phases of scholarly literature, each of which highlight and examine the various names given to and the forms attributed to USCA, since the conclusion of the Vietnam war; for example, Vietnam Syndrome.

- Phase one examines literature written between the end of Operation Desert Storm in 1991, until September 11, 2001.
- Phase two focuses on literature written after the US led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Both phases contain scholarly contributions that are directly linked to USCA, Andrew Priest's journal article *From Saigon to Baghdad: The Vietnam Syndrome, the Iraq War and American Foreign Policy* (2009); work from a larger pool of generic scholarship, (US foreign policy, political and military history) for example, Russell Weigley's *The American Way of War* (1973); and literature which examines specific wars and conflicts on conflicts, G.C. Herring's *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (1979).

Phase one began at the conclusion of Operation Desert Storm (1990-1991), when a small group of scholars questioned the validity of President George H.W. Bush's statement "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam Syndrome once and for all."¹

Prior scholarly contributions had focussed on the Vietnam War in the context of US foreign policy and strategic planning decisions. However, there was an increase of scholarly interest during the 1990s when the United States was involved in military operations such as in Somalia and Kosovo. In this literature, scholars directly reviewed the cultural and societal impact of the Vietnam War and Vietnam Syndrome. It consistently highlighted a pattern of reluctance by the United States to commit its troops to military operations which specifically required troops on the ground; and when the US did commit to military operations, significant Force Protection measures were implemented to protect its people, often to the detriment of those they were sent to help.

The second phase followed the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and once again the consequences and lessons of the US experience during the Vietnam War and its aftermath were scrutinised. These scholars drew similar conclusions to those in phase one, though phase two examined a new concept - Iraq Syndrome. Scholarly papers which undertook a comparative review of the US military

¹ V. Prashad, The Vietnam Syndrome, *World Affairs*, 20, 22.
<http://www.flonnet.com/fl2022/stories/20031107000306200.htm> [Accessed 10/05/04].

intervention of Vietnam with Iraq found that both wars had fostered the development of caution and concern over escalating US casualty figures because the political justifications for war were flawed. Furthermore, the United States again returned to cautious foreign policies because it did not wish to become involved in military ground operations elsewhere.

Phase One

The suitable starting place for this literature review is the body of work which examined the Vietnam War. Following the conclusion of the Vietnam War in 1975, scholars gradually assessed the impact of political, diplomatic and military decisions made during the prolonged conflict. There still remains a consensus amongst scholars that the Vietnam War led to significant structural changes for the United States, especially in relation to its conduct of statecraft, its military, and wider society.

- Arnold Isaacs, who covered the last three years of the Vietnam War for the *Baltimore Sun*, wrote that the “Vietnam War still casts long shadows over American life. It lingers in the national memory, hovering over our politics, our culture, and our long, unfinished debate over who we are and what we believe.”²
- George C. Herring reflected that “it has been a moving and at times emotionally wrenching experience to witness the hold it continues to have on the nation and especially on those individuals directly affected by it. It has been fascinating as a historian to observe and at times participate in the ongoing and still-heated debate on the war’s meaning and lessons.”³
- Robert S. McNamara described the huge body of analysis about the US experience of the Vietnam War as being like a game of chess: “the very impossibility of knowing all the right moves only adds to the fascination of the puzzle.”⁴ Simply, it “was a national disaster for the United States.”⁵
- Andrew Priest added that “although the United States suffered nothing as extreme as either invasion or societal collapse as a result of defeat in Vietnam, there is no doubt that the psychological trauma was felt, and continues to be felt, at many different levels.”⁶

² A.R. Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows the War, Its Ghosts, and its Legacy* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1997), XI.

³ G. C. Herring, ‘Preparing *Not* to Refight the Last War: The Impact of the Vietnam War on the U.S. Military’, in C. E. Neu, (ed.), *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2000), 56-84: 57-58.

⁴ R. S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Vintage, Books Random House. 1996), 399.

⁵ A. Priest, ‘From Saigon to Baghdad: The Vietnam Syndrome, the Iraq War and American Foreign Policy’ *Intelligence and National Security*, 24, 1 (2009), 139-171: 144.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

From this a body of work developed which examined what went wrong; the dominant message being that this could not happen again. Scholars have subsequently inherited a broad range of literature on the Vietnam War, which is widely studied.

This literature, which can be viewed as a catalyst for a smaller group of scholars that emerged, provided a comprehensive account of instances of excessive caution following conflict, which established the view that is now held by many scholars, that military caution developed as a direct reaction and consequence to the Vietnam War. It is important to note that this is a small group of scholars, contrary to Andrew Priest's observation of the "wide range of literature on the Vietnam Syndrome,"⁷ and the "rich variety of literature now available on the topic."⁸ The comment is misleading as an assessment because the bibliographies of key literary works show repeated recycling of content from key sources such as John Mueller and George C. Herring, giving the impression of a larger body of literature.

However, these contributions are still valuable, as they examine casualty aversion in its many forms, notably the Vietnam Syndrome. For example, Herring wrote that no other event in the United States' history challenged "Americans' traditional beliefs about themselves, [and] the notion that in their relations with other people they had generally assumed a benevolent role, the idea that nothing was beyond reach. It was a fundamental part of a much larger crisis of the spirit that began in the 1960s, raising profound questions about America's history and values."⁹

Vietnam Syndrome

It is alleged that Henry Kissinger coined the term '*Vietnam Syndrome*' following the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam. Its original usage was limited to and remained predominantly in the lexis of the US political system and the media to account for a "fear of military failure, heavy casualties and thereby loss of political capital."¹⁰ Simultaneously, a small collection of independent scholarly work was published which focussed on the United States' military mistakes, and gradually the term '*Vietnam Syndrome*' was assimilated into their research.

Vietnam Syndrome was identified as the most significant reason for the United States being reluctant to place ground troops into military operations. Yet despite significant literature on the

⁷ Ibid., 169.

⁸ Ibid., 142.

⁹ G. C. Herring, 'America and Vietnam: The Unending War', *Foreign Affairs*, 70, 5 (1991/1992), 104-119: 117.

¹⁰ Prashad, 'The Vietnam Syndrome'.

subject, a definition of Vietnam Syndrome remained elusive, and its link to USCA remained incomplete and in need of further research.

Definitions of Vietnam Syndrome have remained nebulous despite its frequent usage.

- Arnold Isaacs credited the classic version to President Richard Nixon when highlighting statements from his book: *No More Vietnams*. Nixon wrote: “our ineptness in Vietnam led many Americans to question the wisdom of using power at all... many of our leaders have shrunk from any use of powers because they feared it would bring another disaster like the one in Vietnam.”¹¹
- For Ronald Steel, the Vietnam War “spawned a cautionary phrase – ‘Vietnam Syndrome’– that governed U.S. foreign policy for the following 30 years... Simple in phrasing but vague in meaning.”¹²
- Robert K. Brigham defined the Vietnam Syndrome as “an unwillingness to engage the world out of fear of another Vietnam.”¹³
- Andrew Priest maintained that the Vietnam War had “a profound effect on the conduct of American foreign policy”, resulting in “the Vietnam Syndrome.”¹⁴ Priest acknowledged that Vietnam Syndrome was ‘ill-defined’ but he importantly recognised that “[w]hile not all the authors of post-Vietnam literature deal directly with the Vietnam Syndrome, most either explicitly or implicitly explore the break-down of the Cold War consensus and the so-called ‘national malaise’ that Vietnam helped to produce.”¹⁵
- Jon Roper used the definition offered by Michael Klare of “the American public’s disinclination to engage in further military interventions in internal third world conflicts.”¹⁶
- David Ryan wrote that *Vietnam Syndrome* “represented a modicum of democratic influence over executive options in making war, strategies of intervention represented a compromise between the various presidencies and the parts of U.S. culture and its population that were wary of motives for war.”¹⁷

¹¹ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 66.

¹² R. Steel, ‘An Iraq Syndrome?’ *Survival*, 49, 1 (2007), 153-162: 153.

¹³ R. K. Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* (New York: PublicAffairs. 2006),140.

¹⁴ Priest, ‘From Saigon to Baghdad’, 139-171: 145.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁶ J. Roper, ‘Europe’s Vietnam Syndrome: America and the Quagmire of Iraq’ in J. Dumbrell & D. Ryan (ed.) *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghosts* (London and New York: Routledge. 2007), 139-158: 143.

¹⁷ D. Ryan, ‘“Vietnam”, Victory Culture and Iraq’, in J. Dumbrell & D. Ryan (ed.) *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghosts* (London and New York: Routledge. 2007), 111-138: 113.

- Benjamin Buley added that “the concept was taken to mean that after the trauma of defeat (itself an anomaly in a two-century military tradition that had known only victories, with the partial exception of the War of 1812), the American people would no longer support risky foreign interventions.”¹⁸
- Geoff Simons’ book, which included ‘*Vietnam Syndrome*’ in its title, disappointingly, did not provide a comprehensive or consistent definition for Vietnam Syndrome; instead, it provided a detailed but generic chronological assessment of key events of the Vietnam War. This may have been a missed opportunity to fully explore Vietnam Syndrome, but Simons’ work did help to create the foundations for further exploration of Vietnam Syndrome.

The lack of a universally accepted definition of Vietnam Syndrome is partially due to its simple phrasing: the term has been used as an analogy, a metaphor and a political slogan. Whilst it has remained vague, it has been associated with a wide variety of social and cultural themes from the 1960s and 1970s. Along similar lines, Brian Balogh implied that the term Vietnam Syndrome had come to represent the mood of the United States in the 1970s, stating that “America had lost its sense of common purpose,”¹⁹ and was “lacking the confidence, optimism, and sense of national purpose that had dominated the immediate [post-war] period.”²⁰ Jon Roper added that “the subjective perceptions wrapped up in the Syndrome have proven more difficult to resolve. Differing attitudes towards Presidential military interventions overseas thus symbolise an ideological and political divide within America.”²¹

Additionally, Vietnam Syndrome came to represent the “continued unwillingness of the U.S. population to accept the possibility of its repeat,”²² and “politicians will not enter into conflict so readily if they know that their electorate will actually see what happens.”²³ Hudson and Stanier commented that no US President wishes to be present “when the coffins arrive from abroad draped with stars and stripes to be quickly surrounded by weeping relatives.”²⁴ The repatriation of US

¹⁸ B. Buley, *The New American Way of War: Military Culture and the Political Utility of Force* (London & New York: Routledge. 2008), 63.

¹⁹ B. Balogh, ‘From Metaphor to Quagmire: The Domestic Legacy of the Vietnam War’ in C. E. Neu, (ed.), *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2000), 24-56: 43.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 24-56: 43.

²¹ J. Roper, ‘Europe’s Vietnam Syndrome’, 139-159: 143.

²² S. Smith, ‘Ghost of Vietnam,’ *Socialist Review*, 231 (1999), 2.

²³ M. Hudson & J. Stanier, *War and the Media* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited. 1999), 313.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 313.

citizens fatally wounded in service to their country is a poignant reminder to all Americans of the consequence of engaging in military operations.

Following consultations with Eric Grove and Paul Robinson in 2004 to establish a concise definition of Vietnam Syndrome, the definition agreed to and used was: “The reluctance of the United States of America after the withdrawal from Vietnam to engage in military operations that would incur significant casualties.”²⁵ As no further contributions have since provided a more compelling or definitive definition, and the above definition remains relevant, it was agreed for purposes of consistency that this definition would be applied throughout this thesis.

A significant development for the literature corresponded with a growth in literature during the 1990s related to Weinberger criteria and the Powell Doctrine. Attention was initially given to Casper Weinberger (Secretary of Defence, 1981-1987) and his November 1984 National Press Club speech entitled ‘*The Uses of Military Power*’. Following US military fatalities in the Middle East, Weinberger attempted to respond to the controversy of deploying troops overseas for military and peacekeeping operations. Charles Stevenson’s scholarly paper was the first to document Weinberger’s criteria in 1996, condensing them from public statements and official documents into a list:

- When vital interests are at stake, the nation should use whatever force may be necessary to achieve a quick, decisive victory with low US casualties.
- When important but not truly vital interests are at stake, and when the costs and risks of military action are commensurate with such interests and success is likely, limited military means may be used for limited political objectives.
- In all cases, political leaders should provide military commanders with clear political objectives that can be translated into clear and attainable military missions.
- Before forces are committed to action, they should be given milestones for measuring the accomplishment of their mission and an exit strategy.
- There should be reasonable assurance of public and congressional support for the planned use of force.²⁶

²⁵ C. E. Paterson, *America’s Achilles Heel*, Masters Dissertation (University of Hull. 2004), 4.

²⁶ C. A. Stevenson, ‘The Evolving Clinton Doctrine on the Use of Force’ *Armed Forces & Society*, 22, 4 (1996), 511-35: 511-12.

Stevenson's appraisal noted that Weinberger's criteria "declared what not to do rather than when to take bold action."²⁷ He added that "it is not always clear what should be done if some choices are unclear or run counter to those favoured in the bulk of the replies."²⁸

Arnold Isaacs similarly summarised Weinberger's criteria in 1997:

- US armed forces should be committed to combat only when the purpose was "deemed vital to our national interest" and there was a "clear intention of winning."
- A war must have "clearly defined political and military objectives."
- The policy of using force must be "continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary."
- The "commitment should be approved by the American people and their elected representatives in Congress."
- Going to war must be "a last resort" after all other possible policies had been tried and failed.²⁹

Blechman & Cofman Wittes commented on Weinberger's commitment to US military force being the last resort: "Threats of force should not be used as part of diplomacy. They should be used only when diplomacy fails and, even then, only when the objective is clear and attracts the support of the American public and the Congress."³⁰ The Weinberger criteria attempted to provide a guide to managing and overseeing military interventions, along with managing expectations of casualties.

George C. Herring highlighted that "Weinberger's initiative provoked a 'bloody fight' within the Reagan administration."³¹ The literature which followed this referenced the ideological rift between Weinberger and George Shultz (Secretary of State: 1982-1989) on the issue of determining when military force should be implemented. Shultz claimed that the criteria was "Vietnam Syndrome in spades."³² K. J. Campbell noted that Shultz's speeches called for "more flexibility in the use of American military force. Warning against 'self-doubt' and 'paralysis' in American foreign policy."³³ Robert K. Brigham added that Shultz had argued: "diplomacy needed the constant threat of military force to succeed. Shultz did not believe the nation was suffering from Vietnam Syndrome and he

²⁷ Ibid., 511-35: 515.

²⁸ Ibid, 511-35: 512.

²⁹ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 73.

³⁰ B. M. Blechman, Barry & T. Cofman Wittes, 'Defining Moment: The Threat and Use of Force in American Foreign Policy' *Political Science Quarterly*, 114, 1, (1999), 1-30: 2.

³¹ Herring, 'Preparing not to refight the last war', 56-84: 74.

³² Ibid., 56-84: 74.

³³ K. J. Campbell, 'Once Burned, Twice Cautious: Explaining the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine' *Armed Forces & Society*, 24, 3 (1998), 357-374: 364.

thought Congress would support U.S. military intervention whenever and wherever it was needed.”³⁴ Benjamin Buley stated that Weinberger was convinced that the State Department and National Security staff were “spending most of their time thinking up ever more wild adventures for our troops.”³⁵

Having re-examined existing scholarly material, Arnold Isaacs focussed on ‘how’ and ‘why’ US society and its culture were unable to banish the memories and the US experiences of the Vietnam War. Isaacs observed Americans still see “Vietnam everywhere, a ghost in every conflict. Vietnam in Angola. Vietnam in Nicaragua. Vietnam in El Salvador, in Guatemala, in Beirut. The ghost whispers contradictory messages. To some it says, ‘stay out.’ To others it says, ‘Fight this one to win’... The place names changed in subsequent years, but the arguments, in many important respects, did not.”³⁶ Additionally, Isaacs noted the “inherent illogic in the notion that the United States could use military power to serve national policy without any risk that American soldiers might actually be killed or wounded.”³⁷

Literature which generically considered President Bill Clinton’s foreign policy wrote of the policy’s occasional incoherence. Colin S. Gray assessed US national security policies of the 1990s and concluded that they have “every appearance of being thoroughly reactive, and certainly of lacking inspiration and guidance by an organizing concept worthy of the title.”³⁸ Gray added in his review that the Clinton administration “succeeded in defining or articulating a national security policy that matched the fact of America’s contemporary dominance, or that recognized explicitly the global role that dominance implied.”³⁹

The Clinton years were characterised by an oscillation between caution and re-engagement, giving the impression of a reactive foreign policy. Additionally, throughout the two terms, the administration had projected a reluctance to deploy troops, especially a ground presence, instead preferring to use diplomacy with the hope that a peaceful solution could be found. Yet at the closure of his tenure, President Clinton had used the military “more often than any previous peacetime American president.”⁴⁰

³⁴ Brigham, *Is Iraq Another Vietnam?* 148.

³⁵ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 65.

³⁶ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 66.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁸ Gray, *The Sheriff*, 75.

³⁹ Gray, *The Sheriff*, 39-40.

⁴⁰ P J. O’Rourke, *Peace Kills; America’s Fun New Imperialism* (New York: Picador. 2005), 8.

Having inherited Operation Restore Hope in Somalia (December 1992 - May 1993), and in sharp contrast to the success of 1991, the operational outcomes of this military operation provide significant indications that the United States had not overcome its casualty aversion. There is a small pool of literature available which focuses on the operational outcomes, for example *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern Warfare* by Mark Bowden (journalist). This book provides a detailed account of the military operation and its outcomes and in 2001 was adapted into a film by Ridley Scott, which brought the events in Somalia to the attention of the wider public.

There is a consensus that “the ignominious withdrawal of the United States from Somalia, and the absolute refusal to commit American ground troops to the conflict in Bosnia have all combined to diminish the enthusiasm for peacekeeping which was so evident in President Bush’s September 1992 address to the United Nations General Assembly.”⁴¹ Ronald Steel referred to the operation as a “failed foray into the clan wars of Somalia that the effects of the syndrome still held.”⁴² Though the term ‘Somalia Syndrome’ was used in the media, there is still insufficient scholarly literature to determine the precise meaning of this phrase.

President Clinton was conflicted and prudent in his decision-making regarding the case for military intervention and the increased need for humanitarian crisis management. Robert K. Brigham noted that “the pressing international questions were no longer about fears of another Vietnam but instead about ethical dilemmas concerning military intervention to support human rights.”⁴³ The dilemma associated with placing or not placing US troops on the ground and its consequences led to tensions within his administration. Kenneth J. Campbell observed that due to “the lessons of Vietnam and the lessons of Munich, the Pentagon’s doctrine of reluctance has been mostly successful in avoiding both quagmires and appeasement.”⁴⁴ Campbell added that during the 1990s the Pentagon furthered its influence on the administration, whilst simultaneously being “irrevocably committed to promulgating a doctrine of great caution in the use of military force.”⁴⁵

Campbell’s opinion was that the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine “enhanced the democratic character of American foreign policy by reinforcing the legitimate role of public opinion and Congress in the political process of taking a nation to war.”⁴⁶ Consequently, when President Clinton suggested that

⁴¹ Editor, The U.S. and Peacekeeping: A change of Heart, *Peacekeeping & International Relations*, 23, 1 (1994), 1.

⁴² R. Steel, ‘An Iraq Syndrome?’ *Survival*, 49, 1 (2007), 153-162: 154.

⁴³ Brigham, *Is Iraq Another Vietnam?* 155.

⁴⁴ Campbell, ‘Once Burned, Twice Cautious’, 357-374: 368.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 357-374: 357.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 357-374: 368.

US forces be deployed to support humanitarian and military operations, the Joint Chiefs insisted that “before U.S military forces be [placed] in harm’s way, certain clear conditions for the proper use of force should first be met.”⁴⁷ Campbell went on to comment that “these military leaders pointed to costly failures and humiliating withdrawal from places such as Vietnam, Beirut, and Somalia as clear examples of the price to be paid for imprudent military interventions in ambiguous distant conflicts.”⁴⁸

Due to the legacy of the Vietnam war, throughout the 1990s there was constant deliberation about the justifications for the use of US military force. Are these actions morally justified? Are they deemed to be in the national interest? Once the decision-making process was completed, a justification had to be disseminated throughout US society. Notably, military interventions which required the deployment of troops on the ground had to be avoided. Importantly for this thesis, their concerns stemmed from an underlying aversion to their own casualties.

During this same period, Force Protection Doctrine provided a considered compromise for instances in which US military intervention was deemed ‘necessary’. Theoretically, it enabled US political elites to commit troops to international conflict zones, whilst reducing operational risk to US military personnel. Paul Robinson’s paper, “*Ready to kill but not Die*”: *NATO Strategy in Kosovo*’, drew its name from the published statement made by the French General Philippe Morillon, “*Who are these soldiers who are ready to kill, but not ready to die?*”⁴⁹

Robinson defined Force Protection as “the protection of one’s troops as an absolute priority in war.”⁵⁰ The paper theoretically highlighted the relationship between Force Protection, the Powell doctrine and the US Air Forces Doctrine of Strategically Paralyse, which stated that “the United States should use massive power to crush its opponents completely when it goes to war.”⁵¹ Robinson stated that this approach had informed the strategy of the United States military in 1999, while carrying out Operation Noble Anvil and Operation Allied Force.

Just as the scholarly literature focussed its attention on NATO’s Operation Allied Force rather than Operation Noble Anvil, so too does this review. In summary, Operation Allied Force commenced on March 24, 1999, against Serbian forces and lasted 78 days. Its intent was to halt the Serbian forces

⁴⁷ Ibid., 357-374: 357.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 357-374: 357.

⁴⁹ P. Robinson, ‘Ready to kill but not die’ NATO strategy in Kosovo, *International Journal* (1999), 671-682: 673.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 671-682: 673.

⁵¹ Ibid., 671-682: 674.

from continuing their campaign against Kosovar Albanians. There were no allied military fatalities; there were no NATO ground troops deployed. The operation had a complete reliance on a strategy of air power and technology, which consisted of “37,465 sorties, of which over 14,006 were strike missions, flown by NATO pilots.”⁵² It is recorded that NATO had deployed “218 Tomahawk sea launched cruise missiles, and B-52 bombers had deployed another 90 conventional air-launched cruise missiles.”⁵³ Robert Mandel noted that the operation provided the first combat use of “the satellite-guided joint direct attack munition from altitudes of 40,000 feet delivered by the B-2 bomber” and that “this weapon - along with conventional air-launched cruise missiles, and selected Tomahawk missiles-proved to be impervious to weather.”⁵⁴ The reliance on airpower and technology did not achieve NATO’s desired objective and the civilian casualty figure substantially exceeded the estimated figure of between 5,000 to 10,000 civilians, in the final count.

The decision not to place military boots on the ground allowed for continued aggression against the civilian population. The moral justification for the operation was called into question when “in the first two weeks of NATO’s campaign more Kosovars were killed than in the entire decade since Kosovo’s autonomy was revoked, and hundreds of thousands were driven out of their homes.”⁵⁵ Overall, NATO’s Operation Allied Force incurred negative criticism from contemporary commentators who perceived the strategy implemented as “a coward’s strategy.”⁵⁶ The implementation of the strategy, which was led by the United States, demonstrated that “[t]he leaders in the West and especially the United States of America have come to rely on technology and air power in order for them to achieve its military objectives.”⁵⁷ Condoleezza Rice commented that “the Kosovo War was conducted incompetently, in part because the administration's political goals kept shifting and in part because it was not, at the start, committed to the decisive use of military force.”⁵⁸ Inevitably, these outcomes sparked scholarly debate, which focuses predominantly on the overreliance of air power and Force Protection, particularly by the United States.

⁵² A. Roberts, NATO’s ‘Humanitarian War’ over Kosovo, *Survival*, 41, 3 (1999), 102-123: 109.

⁵³ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 80.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 80-81.

⁵⁵ Robinson, ‘Ready to kill but not die’, 671-682: 676.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 671-682: 673.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 671-682: 673.

⁵⁸ C. Rice, ‘Promoting the National Interest’ *Foreign Affairs*, 79, 1 (2000), 45-62: 52.

Robinson asserted that the United States was “willing to kill for its principles but not fight”⁵⁹ This assessment was correct; the operation was mandated to keep NATO casualties low, especially those of the United States. Robinson highlighted instances of Force Protection being implemented, for example “in the initial stages of the campaign, NATO airplanes avoided the most dangerous targets by focusing on ‘strategic’ political and economic targets”⁶⁰ rather than Yugoslav forces on the ground. Robinson reinforced his rationale by including comments from military practitioners and commentators:

- Ralph Peters stated that “Western leaders have become entranced by the idea of bloodless techno-war: NATO chose not the instruments that might do the job, but the instrument of least risk.”⁶¹
- The French General, Bernard de Bressy remarked: “To avoid losses, Force Protection takes the place of the execution of the mission, which is often reduced to second place totally to the contrary of everything that is taught in military schools.”⁶²
- General Bernard de Bressy explicitly described the result of implementing Force Protection: “In Kosovo, where the mission was to preserve Kosovar lives, putting the mission in second place resulted in their death and displacement. Force protection was achieved at the cost of other’s suffering.”⁶³

Robinson noted that the implementation of Force Protection by NATO forces inspired Yugoslavia’s resistance and invited confrontation, and if instead NATO leaders had “shown willingness from the start to accept the casualties that would result in a ground campaign, Yugoslavia might not have chosen to fight.”⁶⁴ This “determination to resist was in part inspired by a conviction that NATO would never invade Kosovo by land, and it is perhaps no coincidence that its eventual capitulation came when NATO leaders for the first time seemed to be willing to endorse such invasion.”⁶⁵

Despite the resounding success of incurring no NATO casualties, Robinson endorsed the view that airpower alone was not a panacea because the intended objectives of the operation were not initially achieved. Writing in the same year and forming similar conclusions, Adam Roberts observed

⁵⁹ Robinson, ‘Ready to kill but not die’, 671-682: 673.

⁶⁰ Robinson, ‘Ready to kill but not die’, 671-682: 671.

⁶¹ Ibid., 671-682: 673.

⁶² Ibid., 671-682: 681.

⁶³ Ibid., 671-682: 681.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 671-682: 679.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 671-682: 679.

that humanitarian interventions in the 1990s were stalked by “Western powers that are willing to intervene militarily [and] are reluctant to accept the risk of casualties.”⁶⁶ Similarly to Robinson, he detailed the flaws in and consequences of the NATO strategy, while recognising the influence of Force Protection and demonstrating the consequences of excluding a land option. Roberts remarked that this “was the most extraordinary aspect of NATO’s resort to force,”⁶⁷ and that by NATO members creating “a credible threat of a land option proved to be one of the most important and difficult tasks of the war.”⁶⁸

It is evident that the initial strategy of no NATO ground troops hindered the overarching strategy and its intended outcome, leading to a situation in which “the FRY forces could concentrate on killing and the concealment rather than defence, while in Belgrade the Yugoslav government could simply sit out the bombing.”⁶⁹ Both papers drew similar conclusions, as their intent was to provide a review of the operational strategy and tactics implemented during Operation Allied Force in relation to Force Protection and an overreliance on air power, and to examine the operational deficiencies. Neither paper fully engages in a detailed exploration of the influence of Force Protection and how it came to influence Operation Allied Force. These papers, especially Robinson’s, embedded the term *Force Protection* into scholarly literature, and segments became the stimulus for other scholarly papers, a case study and for further research exploring US preferences of airpower and Force Protection. Additionally, neither paper looked into similar trends and the possibility of Force Protection occurring earlier than the Weinberger criteria and the Vietnam War.

Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo and the Future of Combat, by General Wesley K. Clark is essential reading for any scholar who is studying the Balkan conflicts. In his autobiography Clark acknowledged Force Protection, and asked: “Why did this new style of warfare emerge, this aversion to casualties, the reluctance to put ground troops into the fight, the reliance on airpower, the continued tensions over unintended civilian casualties, and the frictions and constant scrutiny by the press?”⁷⁰ Clark went on to suggest: “It’s the story behind the story - the waging of modern war - driven by technology, international law, twenty-four-hour news coverage, and a resource-rich American military that is the heir of all military developments and tragedies of the twentieth

⁶⁶ Roberts, NATO’s ‘Humanitarian War’ over Kosovo, 102-123: 110.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 102-123: 112.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 102-123: 112.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 102-123: 112.

⁷⁰ W. K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo and Future of Combat* (Oxford: Public Affairs Ltd. 2001), XXIII-XXIV.

century.”⁷¹ In regards to US military strategy, Robinson highlighted Clark’s reflection that Carl von Clausewitz had written “destruction of the enemy’s forces is the overriding principle of war.”⁷² Yet, in modern warfare there is a “fear that attacking enemy forces will be too costly in terms of casualties. Instead, they believe that by bombing strategic political and economic targets they can ‘paralyze’ the enemy and destroy his will to resist so that he will drop his weapons without fighting.”⁷³

Clark reaffirmed the United States reluctance to suffer casualties and provided clarification on tensions between Washington and Europe on establishing a commitment for a land option. Clark maintained that the United Kingdom was willing to put forward ground troops but was met with significant reluctance from President Bill Clinton and the DOD. He recalled a conversation with Prime Minister Tony Blair:

[Blair] “Now, are we going to win without ground troops?”

[Clark] “I’ll do everything possible to make it happen, but I can’t guarantee it with air power alone.”

[Blair] “Will you get ground troops if you need them?”⁷⁴

Clark knew the United Kingdom was supportive of moving ahead with preparations for the use of ground forces and replied without hesitation: “For that, I’ll probably have to depend on you.”⁷⁵ Clark was speaking as an Allied officer, trying to accomplish a mission, though was already aware of a “bitter taste of the Pentagon’s resistance to advancing preparations for possible ground operations.”⁷⁶

Jeffery Record’s paper, *‘Force-Protection Fetishism, Sources, Consequences, and (?) Solutions’*, argued that USCA was a “negative symptom of the Vietnam conflict and Weinberger-Powell Doctrine,”⁷⁷ adding that “the current casualty ‘phobia’ among the military and political leadership is unwarranted because it is shared by the populace at large and detrimental to America’s military effectiveness.”⁷⁸ Record declared: “Nor is force-protection fetishism a passing phenomenon. It

⁷¹ Ibid., XXIII-XXIV.

⁷² Robinson, ‘Ready to kill but not die’, 671-682: 674.

⁷³ Ibid., 671-682: 674.

⁷⁴ Clark, *Waging Modern War*, XXXV.

⁷⁵ Ibid, XXXV.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. XXXV.

⁷⁷ J. Record, ‘Force-Protection Fetishism, Sources, Consequences, and (?) Solutions’ *Aerospace Power Journal*, (2000), 4-11: 4.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 4-11: 4.

derives from America's disastrous experience in Vietnam and prevails among the present national political and military elites, who may have wrongly convinced themselves that the American people have no stomach for casualties."⁷⁹ Record was correct in stating that it was not a passing phase. Consistent with previous scholarly work, Record also agreed that President George H.W. Bush's statement was premature, stating that "the Vietnam Syndrome is alive and better than well. It was not 'kicked' in the Gulf War, as a triumphant President George Bush claimed."⁸⁰

Record hypothesised that the US reluctance to engage in conflict and its policy of Force Protection as a strategic priority was linked to the Vietnam War: "Force-protection fetishism is rooted in Vietnam – specifically in the resultant Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, which is the intellectual construct of the strategic lessons that many military professionals drew from the war."⁸¹ Prior to this, literature had not directly linked Vietnam Syndrome with the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine and Force Protection, despite the idea being explored in scholarly circles. Record also presented NATO's response to the Kosovo crisis as a case study '*Force protection fetishism*',⁸² in which he commented that the behaviour of the United States reflected a "desperate unwillingness to place... the political objective ahead of the safety of its military instrument."⁸³

Despite displaying a modest bias towards the principle of airpower, Record broadened the debate from the confines of the Vietnam Syndrome. He acknowledged the United States' recurring tendency to return to cautious policies, but he refrained from pursuing this idea. This created an opening within this scholarly field and the opportunity to develop an understanding of the role of USCA in the recurring cycle of military intervention followed by military caution, and its theoretical place in US strategic culture.

It is also worth noting that whilst reviewing the use of proxy fighters by the United States military in Afghanistan and Iraq, Benjamin Buley highlighted the association with the 1990s humanitarian missions. He wrote that Force Protection had "forced a tacit dependence instead on 'imperial proxies' (the KLA in Kosovo and Croat ground forces trained by the American private military company MPRI, in Bosnia)."⁸⁴ It had become indicative of the way in which the United States would conduct military operations. Buley added that "the overriding emphasis on 'Force Protection'

⁷⁹ Ibid., 4-11: 5.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 4-11: 4.

⁸¹ Ibid., 4-11: 6.

⁸² Ibid., 4-11: 4.

⁸³ Ibid., 4-11: 4.

⁸⁴ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 81.

severely restricted the ability of American troops to interact with civilians or engage in post-conflict reconstruction activities in the Balkans.”⁸⁵ Despite operational setbacks in early operations, prior to the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the use of ‘proxies’ were advocated as a panacea by key figures in President Bush’s administration. A reduced US operational footfall equated to a reduction in US casualties and the pressures associated with a high US casualty count.

Papers written by Robinson, Roberts, Record and Buley, all acknowledged the existence of Force Protection in US strategic thinking. With the passing of time and as these papers originally demonstrated, Operation Allied Force provides a case study for the implementation of Force Protection and highlights the ramifications of its overuse by US political and military elites. In addition, Record provided a historical time-frame and presented a link between Vietnam Syndrome and Force Protection. The historical time-frame did not examine US history prior to its military intervention in Vietnam, and additionally, these papers did not sufficiently question or explore the principles that underpin the use of these terms. The observation that Vietnam Syndrome and Force Protection are linked and the recurrence of USCA, albeit in different forms and under different names, provides the impetus for further analysis. The question of why the United States did not wish to engage in military operations and sacrifice its own, also remains incomplete. Furthermore, exploration can be undertaken to examine USCA in relation to its influence on US elites and US strategic culture. Notably, the frequency in usage of the terms ‘*Clinton Doctrine*’ and ‘*Powell Doctrine*’ (the core of each of these terms is USCA) increased within US society, especially when Weinberger’s criteria were examined.

The book *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War* intended to provide a “focus on well-defined aspects of the war’s legacy.”⁸⁶ Contributing scholars included Brian Balogh, George C. Herring, Robert K. Brigham along with a contribution from Robert S. McNamara. As a collective, these scholars each provided a scholarly contribution which examined the legacy of the Vietnam War. Anticipating the breadth of the issues raised during and after the Vietnam War, Charles E. Neu noted that this selection of essays left “many questions unanswered, and that they are part of a complicated, long-term historical process of exploring the war and its legacy.”⁸⁷ Particular attention should be given to Brian Balogh’s contribution entitled, ‘*From Metaphor to Quagmire: The Domestic Legacy of the Vietnam War*’. He wrote that “the legacy of Vietnam has proven to be just as unending as the conflict

⁸⁵ Ibid., 81.

⁸⁶ C. E. Neu, (ed.) *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), xiii.

⁸⁷ Ibid., xiii.

itself seemed.”⁸⁸ A statement which remains widely supported by scholars, however, is the premise of Balogh’s work, which highlighted that over time the Vietnam War was replaced by “the power of the Vietnam metaphor”, which “soon substituted the event itself for its causes: Vietnam became the cause of many of America’s problems, even though some of the problems it epitomized were antecedent to the war itself.”⁸⁹

Balogh correctly identified that, “Metaphors are not fabricated out of thin air.”⁹⁰ His review of US social, political and economic context noted that the influence of the Vietnam metaphor had often overshadowed the actual events of military action: “The Vietnam metaphor had engulfed, and certainly seemed to explain, many of these changes.”⁹¹ Balogh established three interwoven elements, which were: “the decline of authority; a new level of conflict; and the fragmentation of national identity.”⁹²

By placing the Vietnam war into its historical context within US society, there were small cultural shifts underway. Balogh additionally highlighted William Chafe’s statement: “A new era had dawned, lacking the confidence, optimism, and sense of national purpose that had dominated the immediate [post-war] period.”⁹³

Balogh deepened his theory by asserting:

Vietnam was such a wrenching emotional experience, because it was so visible – ‘the television war’– because it affected the lives of so many Americans, because the nation felt besieged by the problems in its wake, and most significantly, because even the most optimistic Americans could find little that was positive about the experience.⁹⁴

Balogh explored the relationship between US society’s exposure to the Vietnam War through media and television, but significantly, he demonstrated that “the metaphor mentality ultimately leads to bumper-sticker slogans such as ‘No more Vietnams.’ A historically better-informed explanation of America’s problems can’t be reduced to ‘No more rights’, ‘No more participation.’”⁹⁵ He concluded:

⁸⁸ B. Balogh, ‘From metaphor to quagmire’, 24-56: 26.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 24-56: 38-39.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 24-56: 38-39.

⁹¹ Ibid., 24-56: 43.

⁹² Ibid., 24-56: 39.

⁹³ Ibid., 24-56: 43.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 24-56: 26.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 24-56: 51.

“Metaphors are bad for history. They are good at evoking collective memory and contributing to a sense of shared experience, which we as society are in great need of;”⁹⁶ adding that “demystifying the Vietnam metaphor and placing Vietnam in its proper historical context will allow us to achieve a richer historical understanding of our recent past.”⁹⁷ Importantly, Balogh’s paper provided an insight into the cultural legacies and the influence of a metaphor, yet, he did not fully explore how the Vietnam metaphor developed to demonstrate USCA. Additionally, Balogh did not provide an explanation of why US society considers casualty aversion to be a direct response to the Vietnam War; therefore, providing the need for further investigation of these themes.

Scholars and political commentators question the degree of influence USCA has exerted, in its various forms. Karl. P Mueller described US casualty intolerance as a “cult.”⁹⁸ He considered USCA to be a negative trait; an overreaction to the Vietnam War and a restriction of the US military, instead favouring an active US military and the use of air power. He warned against “paying too much attention to a small number of high-profile cases without placing them in proper context.”⁹⁹ Mueller observed that “many statesmen and generals believe, with absolute and unquestioning conviction, that the United States can no longer use force successfully unless American military casualties are virtually nil, even though there is little evidence to support this belief and in spite of the pernicious effects on U.S. foreign and defense policy,”¹⁰⁰ and this was, in part, “to do with many politicians, military leaders, and journalists being undereducated in history and social science.”¹⁰¹ He also noted “larger historical and technological trends: the increasing potential cleanliness of warfare and the West’s slow, on-going shift away from barbarism.”¹⁰²

As this thesis shows, USCA should not necessarily be perceived as being a negative position. Mueller’s paper however, portrays casualty aversion as a weakness and disadvantage, and warned: “The belief that the United States will avoid risking the lives of its troops, and will capitulate if they are killed in quantity, encourages America’s enemies by offering an apparent means to defeat the numerically and technological superpower.”¹⁰³ Mueller concluded that “the best defense against

⁹⁶ Ibid., 24-56: 52.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 24-56: 53.

⁹⁸ K. P. Mueller, ‘Politics, Death and Morality in U.S. Foreign Policy’, *Aerospace Power Journal* (2000), 12-16:12.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 12-16: 13.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 12-16: 12.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 12-16:13.

¹⁰² Ibid., 12-16:13.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 12-16: 12.

losing public support for military actions once casualties begin to occur is popular conviction of their compelling moral value. To a considerable extent, this can be shaped by effective leaders..."¹⁰⁴

Mueller's paper is highlighted in this review to demonstrate the generalised criticism which USCA has attracted and more importantly, because Mueller suggested that if casualty aversion had occurred earlier in US history, then the American Revolution may not have taken place. He flippantly wrote: "One could add that if the Weinberger Doctrine had held sway in the 1770s, the American Revolution – initially supported by only a third or so of the colonialists – would never have been undertaken."¹⁰⁵ Mueller did not elaborate on his statement and this thesis demonstrates that he was incorrect. However, his work raised interesting points, which were more relevant when first published and, in the present, serve as preparation for potential objections to this thesis.

Before moving to phase two, it is worth noting the documented viewpoints of the United States' adversaries in regards to USCA. Each referenced the US experience in Vietnam and its unwillingness to sustain casualties in prolonged military interaction. It is understood that Saddam Hussein based his strategy for the invasion of Kuwait on the assumption that the United States would not follow through on its threats of military action. Hussein openly told people, including the United States, that "he had nothing to fear from his neighbours and that the only remaining superpower would avert its eyes from any unwelcome activity."¹⁰⁶ It is also recorded that Hussein commented: "Casualties and body bags were the American Achilles Heel."¹⁰⁷ Hussein was of the opinion that "the Americans might fight with their technological weapons but that they would never fight man to man in what he forecast to be the 'Mother of all Battles."¹⁰⁸ The basis of these views were the series of unimpressive American military operations since Vietnam, which "convinced him that he had nothing to fear."¹⁰⁹

During the war, Hussein was not willing to surrender or withdraw his troops. Norman Cigar highlighted this in an early Iraqi assessment:

During the Vietnam War, millions of Americans criticized the war because the casualties were disproportionate to the 'gains', which could be achieved. There is no doubt that the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 12-16: 16.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 12-16: 15.

¹⁰⁶ Hudson & Stanier, *War and the Media*, 213.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 218.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 218.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 211.

families of the soldiers sent to... threaten Iraq's security... will not remain silent about the death of their sons in the Arabian desert at the hands of Iraqi soldiers and will raise their voices high against President Bush.¹¹⁰

Cigar believed that, "until the end, Saddam probably still expected an effective anti-war movement to arise in the United States."¹¹¹ Efraim Karsh provided a similar assessment, referring to statements made by Hussein in various meetings he had held with coalition members, saying that "the United States did not have the necessary 'stomach' for war and that an armed conflict could be averted."¹¹² In a meeting with April Glaspie, Saddam expressed scepticism about US military action claiming: "Your society... cannot accept 10,000 dead in one battle."¹¹³ Saddam Hussein believed that war would be averted because for the US "not a few drops of blood, but rivers of blood would be shed. And then Bush will have been deceiving America, American public opinion, and the American constitutional institutions."¹¹⁴

There was legitimacy in Saddam Hussein's thinking; his strategy reflected his assessment, that the key weakness of the United States was its intolerance to high casualty numbers on the battlefield. Hussein, however, misjudged the US's resolve in devising its strategy; it had formed a coalition and secured the UN mandate; and importantly - gained the support of the US people. It undertook its military operation in line with the new US way of war: using new technologies, airpower and overwhelming force; they conducted a quick and efficient offensive. In addition, the coalition amassed troops in preparation for the ground element, resulting in a successful military operation.

Saddam Hussein was not the only adversary to devise a grand strategy and implement tactics based on a perception of US reluctance to sustain military casualties as they had in the Vietnam War. Blechman and Cofman Wittes observed that during the 1990s US diplomatic elites required more than threats of military force to achieve their objectives against adversaries. Protecting US interests while avoiding military confrontation was no easy task because there is a "generation of political leaders throughout the world whose basic perception of US military power and political will is one

¹¹⁰ N. Cigar, 'Iraq's strategic mindset and the Gulf War: Blueprint for Defeat', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 15, 1 (1992), 6.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1-29: 6.

¹¹² E. Karsh, 'Reflections on the 1990-91 Gulf Conflict', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 19, 3 (1996), 303-320: 311.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 303-320: 311.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 303-320: 313-14.

of weakness, who enter any situation with a fundamental belief that the United States can be defeated or driven away.”¹¹⁵ Their threats had to be supported by military action:

Often they have had to use force – even if only in limited ways – to add strength to the words of diplomats. And at more times than is desirable, the failures of threats and limited demonstrative uses of military power have confronted U.S. presidents with difficult choices between retreat and all-out military actions intended to achieve objectives by the force of arms alone.¹¹⁶

Blechman and Cofman Wittes gave the example of Mohamed Farah Aideed, the leader of the Somali faction, who was open with his views on the subject. Aideed informed Ambassador Robert Oakley, the US special envoy to Somalia: “We have studied Vietnam and Lebanon and know how to get rid of Americans, by killing them so that public opinion will put an end to things.”¹¹⁷ Aideed was correct in his assessment. In 1993, following the deaths of 18 US Rangers, the United States announced its withdrawal from the peacekeeping mission.

In 1999 Daniel Byman & Matthew Waxman highlighted that US casualty intolerance, “lead adversaries to conclude that the US lacks the will to carry out threats. Leaders from Slobodan Milošević to Saddam Hussein have evoked the image of Vietnam to suggest that they can outlast the United States.”¹¹⁸ Richard Holbrooke documented his direct engagements with Slobodan Milošević prior to Dayton. Holbrooke observed that “the Yugoslav’s, who knew exactly how urgent and dangerous the situation was, had been waiting to see if the United States, at the height of its global influence, was disengaged, as they proceeded rapidly on their descent into hell.”¹¹⁹ Additionally, prior to Operation Allied Force being launched, Milošević was assured that “NATO had no stomach for a long war”¹²⁰ and that he could continue his ethnic cleansing, with the hope that “Kosovo would be Serb land again, at last.”¹²¹

Scholars from a variety of backgrounds agreed, and Osama bin Laden alluded to “the basic theory: that terrorists can defeat the United States by continuously inflicting on it casualties.”¹²² John

¹¹⁵ Blechman & Cofman Wittes, ‘Defining Moment’, 1-30: 5.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 1-30: 1.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 1-30: 5.

¹¹⁸ D. Byman & M. Waxman, ‘Defeating U.S. Coercion’. *Survival*, 41, 2 (1999), 107-120: 110.

¹¹⁹ R. Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House. 1998), 27.

¹²⁰ W.I. Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent 1945-2002* (London: Profile Books. 2003), 405.

¹²¹ Ibid., 405.

¹²² J. Mueller, ‘The Iraq Syndrome’ *Foreign Affairs*, 84, 6 (2005), 44-54: 51.

Bowman referred to an interview with John Miller for ABC News in 1998 in which Osama bin Laden stated that over the previous decade the US had declined, and its soldiers were ready to wage wars but “unprepared to fight long wars;”¹²³ bin Laden’s case studies were Beirut and Somalia. “[Our] youth were surprised at [the] low morale of the American soldiers... after a few blows, they ran in defeat... they forgot about being the world leader and the leader of the new world order. They left, dragging their corpses and their shameful defeat.”¹²⁴

Bowman noted a further comment made in December 2001 in *The Times* by Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, an al-Qaeda spokesman: “The Americans must know there are thousands of young people who are as keen about death as Americans are about life.”¹²⁵ Bruce Hoffman acknowledged that Osama bin Laden believed the United States was: “risk and casualty averse and therefore cannot bear the pain or suffer the losses inflicted by terrorist attack... [they are] regarded by bin Laden and his minions as cowards: cowards who fight with high-tech, airborne-delivered munitions.”¹²⁶ Hoffman elaborated that the US “only fights from the air with cruise missiles and bombs. In this respect, bin Laden has often argued that terrorism works - especially against America.”¹²⁷

To summarise, US adversaries observed its military response particularly in Vietnam and Operation Restore Hope and then incorporated USCA into their planning of genocide and terrorist activities. It should not, however, go unnoticed that in 2004 Condoleezza Rice used these adversaries’ assumptions in an attempt to justify the Bush administration’s decision to invade Iraq. Arguing that as a consequence, to the terrorist attacks becoming bolder and more daring:

We were not aggressively going after them. They believed that they were going to win. They saw us cut and run in Somalia. They go all the way back to the fact that the Marines left Beirut after the bombing of the barracks. They believed that if we took casualties, we would not respond. And what they’ve been surprised by is the fact that this time there has been a launching of an all-out war against them.¹²⁸

¹²³ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 30.

¹²⁴ J. Bowman, “Whatever Happened to Honor?” The Bradley Lecture, *American Enterprise Institute*. 10 June 2002. Available online: <http://www.jamesbowman.net/articleDetail.asp?pubID=1169> [Accessed 10/07/2004 & 02/01/2018].

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ B. Hoffman, ‘Rethinking Terrorism & Counterterrorism since 9/11’, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 25 (2002), 303-316: 310.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 303-316: 310.

¹²⁸ C. Rice, Discusses the War on Terror [interview] by Ed Bradley, CBS “60 Minutes” 28 March 2004 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/03/print/20040328.html>. [Accessed: 5/7/2004].

Phase Two

Prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, US society was politically and emotionally divided between those who supported the invasion and those who opposed it. Within these heated debates, the Vietnam War became a reference for those opposed to military action across the political spectrum, not just the anti-war movement. The print media also regularly referenced the Vietnam War. Dominic Tierney noted that:

The *New York Times* published 102 stories during the first year of the nation-building mission in Somalia that also mentioned Vietnam; 39 for Haiti, 104 for Bosnia, 77 for Kosovo, 245 for Afghanistan and 584 for Iraq. The *London Times* ran stories about these missions that also mentioned Vietnam less than half the time: 34 Kosovo, 113 Afghanistan and 227 for Iraq.¹²⁹

The legacy of the Vietnam War always remained as an example of 'unnecessary' US military action. The 2003 invasion of Iraq provided the catalyst for the second phase of scholarly literature. Although the scale of literature remained small there was enough to ignite new debates, which also witnessed the return of scholars from the first phase with new contributions, with noted examples including Melvin R. Laird and John Mueller.

Collectively, the second phase re-examined Vietnam Syndrome, exploring its origins and the consequences. They reviewed other syndromes and analogies associated with post-Vietnam US military intervention. A substantial amount of this phase's literature is concerned with the Iraq War. Themes included in these papers were comparative case studies which explored the similarities and differences between the US military intervention and the occupation of both Iraq and Vietnam. In addition, there was a review of Iraq Syndrome, which had emerged within the US society and its media. The scholarly literature examined the validity of this concept and with this came deliberation and comparative case studies of Vietnam Syndrome and Iraq syndrome. Simultaneously, post September 11 2001 scholars also undertook a process of reassessing the 'American Way of War'. By appraising US military commitments with special attention focused on Afghanistan and Iraq, this body of literature suggested a 'new' US way of war, which was characterised by the principle of bloodless warfare. This thesis however, acknowledges that USCA and the principle of bloodless warfare are intertwined and share many of the same features.

¹²⁹ D. Tierney, 'America's Quagmire Mentality' *Survival*, 49, 4 (2007-08), 47-66: 58.

Evan A. Huelfer's contribution was not uncovered until the later stage of this research process, though once analysed he reaffirmed the value of this work. In contrast to related literature and in-keeping with this thesis, he directly explored the casualty issue and acknowledged the origin of USCA was earlier than the Vietnam War: "the idea that America's sensitivity to high levels of casualties developed during or since the limited wars in Korea and Vietnam is fallacious."¹³⁰ Huelfer acknowledged, as does this thesis, that "democratic societies are intrinsically sensitive to 'wasting' lives in combat. Dating back to at least the Civil War, Americans have been appalled by and intolerant of high casualty rates."¹³¹ Importantly, Huelfer also stated that: "Although not as clearly articulated, the concern for potential losses long predates a linkage to some 'Vietnam Syndrome'. In fact, anxiety over casualties has been a longstanding historical tradition in the United States and was deeply rooted within military culture."¹³² To demonstrate his theory, he provided a detailed case study, which reviewed US history between the end of World War One and the conclusion of World War Two. In summary he stated that during the interwar period the casualty factor "permeated military thinking and policy,"¹³³ and was a prominent consideration in US strategic planning for World War Two.

Huelfer did not use the opportunity to extend the historical scope, as this thesis does. By reviewing earlier historical periods and events, this research uncovered implicit evidence to support a premise that USCA had become embedded in US thinking, prior to both World War One and the Vietnam War. Despite Huelfer's pertinent points, especially to the origins of USCA, he did not, however, develop his arguments sufficiently to overcome the general assumption that USCA arose from the Vietnam War. The literature which followed his publication in 2003 did not explore any of his rationale, nor did it allude to the cause of USCA being anything other than a nation's reaction to the Vietnam War. It is unfortunate that Huelfer's work did not receive the recognition it deserved and remained unnoticed. The exquisite detail of his research could have changed the course of literature, however, it did not until now. It would be reasonable to suggest that Huelfer's contribution should be considered a key case study, as it established that USCA was being implemented prior to World War Two. Furthermore, Huelfer's work did not examine the importance of USCA within US strategic culture, nor did it consider the various traits and principles which led to it becoming so deeply and discreetly embedded, which this thesis does.

¹³⁰ Huelfer, *The "Casualty Issue"*, xi.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, xi.

¹³² *Ibid.*, xi.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, vii.

In 2004 Robert Mandel wrote that he was fascinated with the “seemingly contradictory U.S. desire in recent years to undertake frequent overseas military interventions and at the same time to minimize the loss of life on both sides of a violent conflict.”¹³⁴ Whilst he acknowledged that the US quest for a bloodless war was not new in its thinking and nor was it a realistic proposition as due to the very nature of violent conflict. He asserted that casualty aversion was “one element in the complex and multifaceted calculus of how to engage in foreign military intervention and warfare.”¹³⁵ Mandel endorsed the view that, since the conclusion of the Vietnam War, the United States has placed a ‘special emphasis’ on USCA, which has played an inappropriate and misguided part in military inventions and it was critically important not to credit “casualty aversion strategies as a panacea that can permanently eradicate the horrifying sting of violent conflict.”¹³⁶ He also warned of the dangers associated with “the seductive lure of thinking that one can wage and win modern wars without substantial costs in terms of human life (including both soldiers and civilians and both friends and foes).”¹³⁷ Mandel wrote in 2004 that “what is not so clear at this point is whether and when this emphasis serves to undercut other values surrounding mission accomplishment during wartime.”¹³⁸ This formed the core of his inquiry, in which he theoretically examined current and future influences of Precision-Guided Munitions, Non-Lethal Weaponry and Information Warfare on future security policies.

With a varying degree, Mandel’s work touched upon themes which are of significant value to this thesis. Though his work validated an avenue of inquiry for this thesis, Mandel chose a different route in his research: bloodless warfare. To understand Western culture’s preoccupation with the loss of life in warfare, he supported the examination of actual historical records and noted, “it is clear that its salience has intensified since the end of World War II.”¹³⁹ Mandel asserted that throughout human history, the protection of the sovereign state and its territory took precedence over concerns related to human life:

Many rulers explicitly deemed the lives of their citizens – whether soldiers or civilians – expendable. However, the advent of the more representative forms of government in which leaders have become more accountable to the people, combined with the refinement of

¹³⁴ Mandel, ‘*Quest for Bloodless War*’, x.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, x.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, x.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, x.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

norms and rules guiding behaviour during warfare, has gradually altered this long-standing priority system.¹⁴⁰

Unlike this thesis, Mandel refrained from developing this line of inquiry and his assessment above does not necessarily fit the true historical narrative of USCA. Later chapters in this thesis discuss the importance and value placed on the life of an 'American'. Since the founding of the United States the sacrifice of a US citizen was to be only out of complete necessity and to be avoided.

Mandel briefly considered casualty aversion and what he considered to be its components. He correctly observed that there was "controversy and misconception surrounding the question of just how casualty-sensitive the public really is."¹⁴¹ Mandel affirmed his position on public attitudes which, "reveal no irrational or knee-jerk reactions based on a putative unwillingness to tolerate casualties; they reveal no immature demand for casualty-free security policy."¹⁴² More importantly, and certainly an important link between this thesis and Mandel is that rather than it being the public who influence concerns over strategic interests and tolerance of casualty numbers, it is in fact the elites who direct the narrative on these matters. Mandel highlighted several analysts who also subscribed to the understanding that "elected civilian leaders play a critical role in shaping the public's response to casualties as well as in shaping characterization of the missions for which such casualties may be incurred. As a result, policy uncertainty and disunity among leaders can lower casualty tolerance."¹⁴³ This thesis demonstrates that USCA is reaffirmed within each generation through the actions and opinions of the elite US citizen. Their socialisation, culture, influences and moral principles, are fundamental in allowing us to fully understand USCA. Yet, the exploration into understanding the full impact of the US elite and US strategic policies remains fragmented and has not fully been acknowledged.

Further observations by Mandel included a warning that if not controlled correctly, "casualty aversion can undermine fundamental security objectives."¹⁴⁴ He provided Iraq as his prime example of how "overemphasized casualty minimization in this context can often precipitate pressures for quick withdrawal before mission objectives can be decisively accomplished."¹⁴⁵ Mandel urged US armed forces "to restore and reinforce (and possibly positively transform) the military ethos in the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 11.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 23.

¹⁴² Ibid., 23.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 26.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 156.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 56.

United States in such a way that the timidity often associated with prioritized Force Protection does not become the dominant image either of the nation as a whole or of the soldier in particular.”¹⁴⁶ Mandel, as others have done, portrayed USCA as a weakness rather than viewing it a positive tool in the reduction of civilian and US casualty figures within US strategic planning processes.

Lawrence Freedman’s article in *the Washington Post* in 2005 added a new dynamic to the development of scholarly comparative literature. Rather than a direct strategic comparison, the premise of the article was a detailed comparison of the elite individuals: Robert McNamara (US Secretary of Defence: 1961-1968) and Donald Rumsfeld (US Secretary of Defence: 1975-1977 & 2001-2006). Freedman wrote that “just as Vietnam became McNamara’s War, Iraq has become Rumsfeld’s War.”¹⁴⁷ For Freedman, “at first glance there appears to be little in common between McNamara – the brash, relatively young, number-crunching corporate manager of the 1960s – and Rumsfeld, the relatively old, former wrestler and veteran political bruiser of the 2000s.”¹⁴⁸

Nevertheless, Freedman observed there were similarities which were worthy of further examination.

- Firstly, “when it came to the defense budget, both were leery of military advice, which they believed favored certain weapons programs for institutional as much as strategic reasons. And they carried their suspicions forward into operations, leading both to be accused of arrogance.”¹⁴⁹ Historically, both had an uneasy relationship with the military, although this is not a new way of thinking. Eliot Cohen provided a substantial piece, ‘*Supreme Command*’, regarding the relationships between the civilian leaders and the Generals.
- Secondly, neither McNamara nor Rumsfeld would agree to the initial requests from the Generals for an increase in troop numbers. It was only when the pressure to increase the numbers came from different sectors of their administrations that they both reluctantly did so. Freedman observed that McNamara turned to the concept of a graduated response rather than the required reality of overwhelming force. The Bush administration, most significantly Rumsfeld, “ignored the basic lesson drawn from Vietnam.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 192.

¹⁴⁷ L. Freedman, ‘Rumsfeld’s Legacy: The Iraq Syndrome?’ *Washingtonpost.com*. 9 January 2005. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A58318-2005Jan8> [Accessed 09/11/2017].

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

- Thirdly, they both were self-assured and insisted on micro-management. It was also observed that throughout his tenure, Rumsfeld's behaviour was characterised as: "intimidating, almost abusive."¹⁵¹ His reputation at the DOD apparently gained him the title of "the meddler-in-chief."¹⁵²

To account for Rumsfeld's frustrations, Freedman referred back to Rumsfeld's earlier career. One frustration in particular was that Rumsfeld was "an early enthusiast"¹⁵³ of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) which looked at combining "new information technologies with precision munitions as a means of gaining a competitive edge in regular war."¹⁵⁴ Despite the success of the RMA in Operation Desert Storm, he "was appalled to discover how much the forces were still fixated on preparing for big wars and purchasing high-profile weapons platforms rather than developing smaller, nimbler forces geared to the actual contingencies he thought they were likely to face."¹⁵⁵ As a consequence, "Rumsfeld's 'transformation agenda' put him on a collision course with the generals."¹⁵⁶ Rumsfeld's self-assurance enabled him to follow his own instincts and in Afghanistan and Iraq he initially "could claim vindication."¹⁵⁷ As events rapidly declined in the two war zones, Rumsfeld became isolated due to his management style and with few supporters he was "vulnerable to the charge that everything that has gone wrong in Iraq is because he ignored military advice."¹⁵⁸ Freedman added:

Rumsfeld's fault lay less in his readiness to challenge military views – which often deserved challenging – but in asking the wrong questions. It is certainly not the case that if only military advice had been followed in Iraq, everything would have been well. In reality the blame for the morass should be shared, for the fault also lies in the U.S. military's insistence on preparing for wars they would prefer to fight rather than those they might need to fight.¹⁵⁹

This may be considered a reoccurring trait of US strategic culture. Freedman was correct when he stated that "the principle of civilian participation in operational decisions should really not be controversial. If it has become so, it is because civilian-military relations have acquired an adversarial

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

character, for reasons that go deeper than Iraq.”¹⁶⁰ When thoroughly examined, this situation demonstrates a part of US strategic culture which is affiliated to the elite citizen.

Freedman reaffirmed that during the 1990s US strategic thinking “encouraged the view that the best way to keep popular support for operations was to keep casualties to a minimum. This meant that Force Protection was the first priority in any operation, and this could be achieved if the United States contribution was confined to air power. The Army was for proper wars; lesser operations such as peacekeeping were best left to allies or, in the case of counter terrorism, to the CIA.”¹⁶¹

He also observed the irony of the interventionists like Rumsfeld who “have been laboring to overcome the Vietnam Syndrome”, as they have left behind a “burdensome Iraq syndrome – the renewed, nagging and sometimes paralyzing belief that any large-scale U.S. military intervention abroad is doomed to practical failure and moral iniquity.”¹⁶² Freedman cautioned that the Iraq Syndrome posed a serious challenge, more so than the Vietnam Syndrome, and “it calls into question not only the wisdom of intervention but the integrity of U.S. intelligence and judgement about what poses a direct threat to U.S. national security.”¹⁶³

He concluded that “Iraq is not an experiment that future U.S. governments will care to repeat.”¹⁶⁴ As the confidence in US intervention was shaken, it led to the conclusion that “whenever the possible use of force is raised again, assurances will be sought that this will not be ‘another Iraq’ and future interventionists will worry about how to shake off the Iraq syndrome.”¹⁶⁵ To Freedman’s credit, by choosing individuals for a comparative study rather than organisations or states, his article enriched the body of literature. Further comparative details would have enhanced this article, although a news website is not necessarily an appropriate platform to establish a rigorous scholarly debate.

As military operations in Iraq stagnated there was a growing fear within US society that the war in Iraq would become another ‘quagmire’ like Vietnam, and these newer operational difficulties would have similar consequences in shaping future military operations. Scholarly papers provided unique contributions and used comparative studies to examine and clarify these assumptions. Principally,

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

they demonstrated that there were similarities between the Iraq and Vietnam wars and it was important to correctly recognise and equally evaluate them in the comparison process. However, the overall consensus was that the US military experiences in Vietnam and Iraq remained very different. Richard Lock-Pullan made a comparison of these wars as being “fraught with difficulties because the wars are so different”,¹⁶⁶ adding that the differences “far outweigh the similarities.”¹⁶⁷ Ronald Steel noted that “Iraq is obviously not Vietnam, but the parallels are striking.”¹⁶⁸

Steel efficiently summarised these parallels:

As in the earlier conflict the war in Iraq: was one of choice, not of necessity; involved a culture alien to American experience; was directed as much against an ideology as a nation-state; sought the political transformation of another society; alienated old allies and threatened the cohesion of NATO; divided Americans and shattered the domestic consensus on the nation’s global role; strained the American economy and added to its crippling debt; and came to be repudiated by the American public that initially supported it.¹⁶⁹

Steel reviewed the Vietnam Syndrome and provided a foundation for further scholarly discussions on Iraq syndrome. He advocated that the Iraq War was a disaster and in regards to national debates about analogies and syndromes in US society he asserted that the Iraq War was not the catalyst, rather these parallels “highlighted and in some cases intensified them.”¹⁷⁰ Steel concluded: “Great empires rarely collapse, or even lose their ambitions, following a colonial skirmish. They generally reorder their priorities. That is why there may well [be] an Iraq Syndrome, but it will be considerably less severe than its advocates hope, or its critics fear.”¹⁷¹

Similarly, the premise of John Dumbrell and David Ryan’s edited book, *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghost*, examined the idea that “the ghosts of Iraq will haunt U.S. strategic thinking for the immediate to mid-term future.”¹⁷² Contributing scholars included Marilyn B. Young,

¹⁶⁶ R. Lock-Pullan, ‘Iraq and Vietnam: military lessons and legacies’, in J. Dumbrell & David R (ed.) *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghosts* (London and New York, Routledge. 2007), 66-85: 66.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 66-85: 80.

¹⁶⁸ Steel, ‘An Iraq Syndrome?’, 153-162: 155.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 153-162: 155.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 153-162: 157.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 153-162: 160.

¹⁷² J. Dumbrell & D. Ryan (ed.) *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghosts*, (London and New York: Routledge. 2007), 2.

Richard Lock-Pullan, John Mueller and Trevor B. McCrisken. Marilyn B. Young firmly stated: "It is the case that Iraq is not Vietnam. It was not Vietnam in 1991 and it is not now."¹⁷³

Generally, these papers agreed on the obvious differences; noting the country's histories; their differing cultures; differences of the terrain; numbers of US troops deployed; and the international context of the decisions for military intervention. There was also an agreement on how radically different the resistance and insurgency in Iraq was from Vietnam. Richard Lock-Pullan summarised: "the nature of the insurgency that U.S. forces face is disparate compared to the one faced in Vietnam."¹⁷⁴

Marilyn B. Young suggested that there was a similarity because of the "task the U.S. has taken upon itself is similar: to bend a country about which it knows little, whose language and history are unknown to its soldiers, to its will."¹⁷⁵ Young was also correct in her 2007 observation that "Vietnam haunts the Iraq war in part because it has begun to smell like defeat."¹⁷⁶ Young noted that for many Americans "only victory gives meaning to the [US] lives lost. To stop fighting short of victory is to render meaningless deaths and maiming suffered thus far. More deaths, grievous wounds are required to one end only: the making meaningful of the deaths and wounding already suffered."¹⁷⁷

Lock-Pullan drew attention to the mindset of the US military and despite an early appearance of success in Iraq, he observed that the important lessons learnt in Vietnam had not been fully learnt and the underlying issues were reoccurring during the occupation of Iraq. Lock-Pullan highlighted the irony that "having been so successful in avoiding the full range of 'lessons from Vietnam' for so long, the Army and the nation are now paying the price as they cope with the problem of how to handle an increasingly intractable war, and the associated fear of an Iraq syndrome."¹⁷⁸ In Lock-Pullan's paper, Iraq Syndrome's definition was accredited to Lawrence Freedman, who stated it was "the renewed, nagging and sometimes paralyzing belief that any large-scale U.S military intervention is doomed to practical failure and moral iniquity."¹⁷⁹ Lock-Pullan observed that the

¹⁷³ M.B. Young, 'The Vietnam laugh track', in J. Dumbrell & D. Ryan (ed.) *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghosts*, (London and New York: Routledge. 2007), 31-47: 39.

¹⁷⁴ R. Lock-Pullan, 'Iraq and Vietnam: military lessons and legacies', 66-85: 66.

¹⁷⁵ M.B. Young, 'The Vietnam laugh track,' 31-47: 39.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 31-47: 39.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 31-47: 43.

¹⁷⁸ R. Lock-Pullan, 'Iraq and Vietnam: military lessons and legacies', 66-85: 81.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 66-85: 81.

United States in Iraq was “ill-prepared for nation-building and civic protection.”¹⁸⁰ He added that “the tools of policy need to change, as does the associated understanding of strategy.”¹⁸¹

Direct references were made to the ‘issue’ of US casualties, and Lock-Pullan reaffirmed that the United States’ reliance on technology had been “enhanced by the Vietnam legacy of casualties,”¹⁸² and had become a “public index of American failure in the war.”¹⁸³ Lock-Pullan accounted for this “broader social trend that is reluctant to have casualties because of increased value given to life-the ‘post heroic age.”¹⁸⁴ He added that casualty avoidance was “vital in perpetuating domestic U.S. support and is inherent in the post-Vietnam officer generation.”¹⁸⁵ Lock-Pullan also considered the centre of gravity in Iraq’s post-war insurgency had become US casualty avoidance. The US Army had successfully “re-asserted the Weinberger doctrine”¹⁸⁶ Despite these measures of Force Protection undermining “the very effort to win the popular support necessary in Iraq.”¹⁸⁷ Lock-Pullan took some steps towards exploring how elite US citizens influenced US society post-Vietnam, especially their expectations of how war should be carried out. As this was is the overall premise of his paper, these influences were not fully examined, which suggests unexplored territory within the literature. Lock-Pullan acknowledged in his conclusion a central point of this thesis, that strategy is a “product of the society from which it emerges; it reflects an understanding of past experiences, current dilemmas and future aspirations, and these tensions and different understandings need to be kept in communication.”¹⁸⁸ It is important to examine a nation’s society and culture to gain an insight into understanding its strategic planning.

Both David Ryan and Trevor B. McCrisken reviewed the use of analogies, specifically the historical and ‘frequent’ references to the Vietnam analogy. McCrisken’s paper provided a concise assessment of analogies in conjunction with Operation Iraqi Freedom and the reconstruction of Iraq. Whilst Ryan reaffirmed the existence of both the Vietnam Syndrome and Powell Doctrine, he remarked

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 66-85: 81.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 66-85: 81.

¹⁸² Ibid., 66-85: 74.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 66-85: 74.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 66-85: 74.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 66-85: 74.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 66-85: 74.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 66-85: 74.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 66-85: 81.

that US policymakers had “tried to limit the range of instruction, to contain the emerging Vietnam Syndrome.”¹⁸⁹

Ryan assessed the influence of the Powell Doctrine and how it became a credible “solution to the dilemma of how to reconcile U.S. credibility and the credibility of their power after the loss in Vietnam with U.S. commitment, resolve, reliability, leadership, decisiveness and its image around the world.”¹⁹⁰ At the core of the Powell Doctrine was “the use of overwhelming power to win decisively and quickly.”¹⁹¹ With US military technology developments, “it almost found a method of intervention that was acceptable in U.S. culture.”¹⁹² Ryan noted that part of the Bush administration’s post September 11 2001 response sought to dispel Vietnam Syndrome and reassert US power: “The war in Iraq, in the slipstream of 9/11, provided the opportunity to overcome such constraints and move beyond the use of exclusive airpower.”¹⁹³ Ryan recorded that as US casualty figures increased, the use of the word ‘Vietnam’ also increased. Ryan bolstered the view that “it was as if the tendons of the Achilles heel had been rediscovered in the ‘American mind’.”¹⁹⁴

The Bush administration attempted to maintain the hearts and minds of the US people. Several presidential addresses to the nation were made, each affirming the United States’ commitment to Iraq: “He reminded the people who had lost relatives in Iraq that ‘we will finish the work of the fallen’; that ‘if additional forces are needed, I will send them,’”¹⁹⁵ despite a reduction in recruits to the armed forces. Ryan’s paper asserted that Washington required an exit strategy, claiming that “they had no clear idea of what the endgame would look like, beyond visions.”¹⁹⁶ Ryan correctly warned in 2007 that leaving Iraq would damage the credibility of the United States. Its use of pre-emptive action “would deepen the Vietnam Syndrome.”¹⁹⁷ He added that, “In a sense, a control mechanism has evolved within our society which is likely to prevent for the foreseeable future any repetition of a Viet-Nam style involvement.”¹⁹⁸ This thesis demonstrates in detail that this suggested

¹⁸⁹ D. Ryan, “‘Vietnam’, Victory Culture and Iraq’, 111-138: 111.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 111-138: 112.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 111-138: 112.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 111-138: 112.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 111-138: 113.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 111-138: 133.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 111-138: 129.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 111-138: 131.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 111-138: 131.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 111-138: 133.

'control mechanism' is USCA and is embedded within US strategic culture, which predates the Vietnam War and which has influenced elite US citizens in their decision-making processes.

McCrisken's paper discussed how the 'Vietnam analogy' was being recalled and used:

As the military and political situation in Iraq worsens, critics of the Bush administration's policy assert that the United States is becoming 'bogged down' in an increasingly complex, unending occupation that is developing into a 'Vietnam-style quagmire'.¹⁹⁹

Elites who were opposed to the military intervention in Iraq used emotive language to capture their citizens' attention and build momentum against the war. An example is the Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy's condemnation of the war and his declaration that "Iraq is George Bush's Vietnam."²⁰⁰

McCrisken's assessment of elite US citizens rhetoric complemented findings from the research process for this thesis. The use of the Vietnam analogy is a particularly popular one in the ongoing discourse around US intervention. Analogies are a common way to make sense out of an unusual situation: "The use of analogies in foreign policy-making is relatively commonplace. Policymakers, and indeed the public at large, often attempt to make sense of current situations by drawing on perceived 'lessons' of the past."²⁰¹ McCrisken also highlighted the use of the Munich analogy in US political culture. The Munich analogy represents the importance of military intervention rather than appeasement. This particular lesson was learnt prior to World War Two, when the Munich Agreement of September 30, 1938 did not succeed in the appeasement of Hitler. Simply put, "appeasement of aggressors must never again be allowed."²⁰² US Presidents who have subscribed to this thinking in regard to potentially dangerous international stirrings, have included "Harry Truman and his advisors over Korea; the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations over Vietnam; and President George W. Bush's father after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990."²⁰³ It has been used to justify US military intervention for causes deemed worthy, just or necessary. Though it has discreetly remained since the late 1970s, the Munich analogy has tended to be overshadowed by the legacy of the Vietnam War.

¹⁹⁹ T.B. McCrisken, 'No more Vietnams', in J. Dumbrell & D. Ryan (ed.) *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, lessons, legacies and ghosts* (London and New York: Routledge. 2007), 159-178: 159.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 159-178: 161.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 159-178: 159.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 159-178: 159.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 159-178: 159.

The Munich analogy justifies intervention and the Vietnam analogy warns against intervention; these two strong and polarised analogies offer a partial explanation of why US foreign policy has swayed between intervention and non-intervention since 1945. McCrisken was correct when he stated that “the use of analogies by presidents and their foreign policy advisors is something of a minefield. While ignoring or discounting history and experience can be naïve, the misapplication of historical analogies can also be detrimental to policy.”²⁰⁴ McCrisken’s paper sparked further research and, in this thesis, these historical analogies have been identified and examined thoroughly to see which have resonated with various elite US citizens’ and consequently influenced their policies and the way in which they have carried out their duties. In addition, McCrisken observed that the United States has “tried to work within or overcome the perceived lessons of the earlier conflict, they have tended not to employ force unless they are confident that intervention has clear, attainable objectives that can be swiftly achieved while minimising casualties.”²⁰⁵ This is a consequence of the systematic US military review process undertaken following military operations, especially those deemed unsuccessful. By re-examining these historical analogies and terms like the Vietnam Syndrome, this thesis shows that each viewpoint recognises the importance of protecting US lives, and there is a stronger link to USCA than is currently appreciated within current scholarly literature.

Overall, *Vietnam in Iraq: Tactics, Lessons, Legacies and Ghosts*, brought together prominent scholars who broadened the literature associated with Vietnam Syndrome. Collectively, they addressed the consequences of the war in Vietnam; examined the use of analogies in US culture and society; connected the lessons of Vietnam to the United States’ caution in its use of its military; and provided a constructive comparative analysis of the US experience in Iraq and Vietnam. However, the potential for further research in relation to the consistent and overarching theme of USCA was not fully examined and has remained incomplete until now.

Dominic Tierney’s paper ‘*America’s Quagmire Mentality*’ noted: “Since the end of the American Civil War, the United States has engaged in cycles of nation-building followed by disillusionment.”²⁰⁶ There is a truth in this statement, which this thesis recognises. Examining the breadth of US policy, there is a pattern of US military intervention, followed by caution. In this opening statement, Tierney also touched upon the possibility that USCA originated at an earlier point in US history: the Civil

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 159-178: 160.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 59-178: 161.

²⁰⁶ D. Tierney, ‘America’s Quagmire Mentality’ *Survival*, 49, 4, (2007-08), 47- 66: 47.

War. As this thesis has sought to thoroughly examine and understand the true origins of USCA, Tierney's assessment is worthy of further investigation. However, unlike this thesis, Tierney's paper subscribed to the belief that the root cause of USCA was the Vietnam War and he made no reference to the Civil War. Missing the potential historic origins of USCA, he instead posed the question: "Why do Americans so consistently adopt a 'quagmire mentality' and perceive such operations as failures?"²⁰⁷

Tierney attributed America's 'Quagmire Mentality' to four sub themes: "American Ideals, elite rhetoric, memories of Vietnam and the media."²⁰⁸ US 'Ideals' relate to the United States' collective perception of its threshold for 'democracy and stability'. As a consequence, military interventions are deemed successful "only if the target ultimately looks like the United States."²⁰⁹ If there is, "virtually any evidence of violence it automatically signifies failure."²¹⁰

Drawing on previous research Tierney also observed that US citizens were more willing to support military intervention, even with high US military casualties if the USA is perceived to be 'winning'. Perceptions of failure also shape the lessons that people draw from events. "Missions remembered as successful provide models for future foreign policy; missions remembered as failures offer warnings about what not to do."²¹¹

It was not the analogies of Vietnam themselves, "rather the information that Americans are quick to draw parallels with Vietnam, and these parallels can make later nation-building missions look like intractable conflicts will ultimately end in defeat."²¹² Tierney specifically examined the presidents' speeches for the use of persuasive language and "grandiose rhetoric,"²¹³ noting a reluctance to manage "expectations with tough and realistic language,"²¹⁴ instead "there is much talk of hope, dreams, freedom and democracy, and little mention of blood, toil, tears and sweat."²¹⁵

Despite a sense of anti-Americanism in Tierney's paper there certainly is value in his contribution, especially in his appraisal of the American experience in Vietnam, and his ideas warrant further

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 47-66: 48.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 47-66: 54.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 47-66: 55.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 47-66: 55.

²¹¹ Ibid., 47-66: 48-49.

²¹² Ibid., 47-66: 58.

²¹³ Ibid., 47-66: 57.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 47-66: 57.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 47-66: 57.

scholarly consideration. However, despite this thesis and Tierney's work making similar observations, there are significant differences in the details. For example, Tierney uses the word 'elite' exclusively in reference to the US President whereas this thesis considers the role of the President and those citizens who are tasked with making significant decisions at the highest level of American society, both political and military, to be of the 'elite'. Regarding the historical breadth, this thesis extends the considered period in US history to prior to the Vietnam War; and although Tierney makes a reference to the Civil War, it is not expanded upon. This thesis, however, reviews the Civil War to establish whether or not the characteristics of USCA were evident, as they had been during World War One.

The New American Way of War and related literature was examined during later stages of the research process. Ben Buley's contribution provided a comprehensive review and a much-needed refreshed account of US warfare. Pertinent findings in his research include:

- There is "no single American way of war or consensus over the proper relationship between war and national policy,"²¹⁶ since there is a contentious relationship between war and political utility in US society.
- The term 'military culture' comprised "basic assumptions about war of those groups within the wider society who are *professionally concerned with the use of military force*, whether they be uniformed military servicemen or civilian strategists."²¹⁷
- Collectively, the United States military culture had not fully comprehended that the conduct of war is "permeated by political considerations."²¹⁸
- The beginning of the Cold War US strategy "reflected the influence of cultural dialectic between polarized conceptions of the political *utility* of military force."²¹⁹
- The "traditional American conception of war as the *failure* of politics is only one of several 'cultural paradigms'— ideal templates for the use of military force and its proper relationship to political considerations – that have successively struggled for dominance of American military culture."²²⁰

²¹⁶ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 6.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

Buley attributed US society's intolerance of high numbers of US military casualties to the Vietnam War. Buley noted:

- “Vietnam produced a whole new attitude.”²²¹
- There is “little doubt that American *military* culture became radically more intolerant of casualties after Vietnam.”²²²
- The “greatest source of the Vietnam Syndrome was the retrospective sense of the war’s futility: despite the massive sacrifice of American lives and resources, South Vietnam still fell.”²²³
- The military’s “attempts to ‘kick’ the syndrome thus concentrated on rebuilding their links with the American people; yet in the process the military’s traditional sensitivity to the limits that a republican political culture imposed on military action transformed into hypersensitivity.”²²⁴
- The new US way of war was “intimately bound up with the desire to overcome the lingering influence of the Vietnam Syndrome.”²²⁵

There is merit in these observations, especially in respect to US foreign policy in the 1990s. Also, in alignment with this thesis, Buley observed that the contemporary debate about a casualty-averse US centres around the Vietnam War and “ignores the wider issue of whether American society has *always* been casualty-averse relative to other cultures.”²²⁶ Though this observation is not unique and within Buley’s work a minor point, which he refrained from exploring further, there is still further research to be carried out, in order to understand the complexity and root causes of USCA. Buley’s work focused on the wider concept of the new way of war and drew on previous scholarly work in this area, for example, R. Weigley’s, *The American Way of War* (1973). Buley’s contribution added to the validity of this thesis and though there are similarities in the particular themes which are discussed, this thesis provides an original perspective. For example, Buley suggested significant factors that have contributed to the perception of US casualties and the justification for implementing military action:

- The strength of US individualism.

²²¹ Ibid., 72.

²²² Ibid., 72-73.

²²³ Ibid., 146.

²²⁴ Ibid., 63-64.

²²⁵ Ibid., 135.

²²⁶ Ibid., 71-72.

- A political system designed to maintain national security with the minimum possible coercion of states and individuals.
- The remoteness of foreign wars.²²⁷
- The US style of war has always been marked by “a conscious attempt to sacrifice machines rather than men.”²²⁸
- The United States military's preoccupation with maintaining its “republican links with the American people and to avoid the involvement in unpopular limited wars for ambiguous political objectives.”²²⁹

Each factor contributes to understanding USCA, however, Buley did not examine these factors in the specific context of USCA, instead, his analysis described them as collectively forming the new way of war. Buley also stated that “the greatest challenge for American military culture in the twenty-first century will be to reconcile this breathtakingly expansive conception of the imperatives on American strategy, with the constraints deriving from the nature of US society itself.”²³⁰ All of his points have validity and though this thesis provides a fuller inquiry into the links between the Republic, the citizen and US strategic culture; they all form an integral part in understanding USCA. There are many contradictions in US society and its foreign policy especially when advocating for the use of its military, and these tensions have created a perception of indecision and indecisiveness. This thesis, unlike previous literature and Buley, provides an explanation of why this continues, and how USCA has been subtly embedded in US strategic culture through the socialisation process of the elite US citizen.

Conclusion

For this review, a wide breadth of scholarly literature was surveyed, including the generic texts written about the Vietnam War and the US experience, for example George C. Herring's *America's Longest War*, and work by a niche collective of scholars, who independently researched specific aspects of the US experience in military operations since the Vietnam War. A range of topics were included: public opinion; the US way of war; and consideration of analogies, metaphors, principles and values. This review highlighted two phases of literature, each formed within the United States' historical narrative. The first, beginning in the late 1970s, and ending on September 11, 2001; the

²²⁷ Ibid., 72.

²²⁸ Ibid., 72.

²²⁹ Ibid., 139.

²³⁰ Ibid., 147.

second was during operations associated with the War on Terrorism, notably, Operation Iraqi Freedom. To varying degrees, in both phases of the literature, scholars and political commentators attribute the United States' reluctance to conduct military operations, notably as a land force; and to sustain its own casualties, as a consequence of the Vietnam War. There is also a consensus that the successful execution of Operation Desert Storm, 1990-1991, did not rid the United States of the Vietnam Syndrome. President George W.H. Bush's statements were proven to be premature. Despite the United States actively engaging in humanitarian and peacekeeping missions during the 1990s, it did so reluctantly, and implemented US Force Protection measures. Paul Robinson's paper provided a concise case study on the over-implementation and restriction of the operation through Force Protection by NATO allies, which ultimately led to unnecessary civilian deaths.

There have consistently been concerns, evident in political and military discourse, over the potential for US military fatalities overseas. The term Vietnam Syndrome was cited in mainstream American media while new terms, phrases and analogies arose that included 'Somalia Syndrome', 'Clinton doctrine' and 'Powell doctrine'. This thesis advocates, by focussing on their definitions, that these terms all share particular traits and are the expression of shared core values. Considering them as a group, rather than individually, they can all be incorporated by the term USCA; which can also be applied to 'Iraq Syndrome'.

A select group of scholars worked on the second phase of literature which reconsidered the United States' military experiences in Vietnam and its related 'syndrome'. Their research encompassed and examined the United States' military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq because, strategically, these operations were changed from an intention of winning the battle to one of maintaining the peace. The consequences provided scholars with further evidence in the form of public opinion data and overt implementations of USCA.

To address popularist comparisons of the Vietnam War with the Iraq War, scholars also undertook comparative studies. These highlighted a proportion of the obvious differences between the Iraq and Vietnam wars in terms of terrain, implementation of strategy and tactics. Interestingly, these comparative analyses highlighted reoccurring similarities, which included public opinion responses; the relationships of political and military US elite's; and the coverage by the media. Both phases of literature reinforced the consensus that USCA was caused by the Vietnam War and this assumption has been a difficult one to overcome.

However, as discussed above, Evan A. Huelfer's *'The "Casualty Issue" in American Military Practice'* deserves a mention in this summary. Similar to this thesis, Huelfer challenged the assumption that USCA was a consequence of the Vietnam War. His case study provided a comprehensive assessment of how the significant loss of US soldiers in World War One impacted US society and culture. Unfortunately, Huelfer's scholarship has not received the attention it deserves. Where this thesis differs from Huelfer, is in undertaking a detailed examination of a wider historical time frame. Examining important historical junctures in US history and searching for the motivation behind elite US citizen's implementation of certain policies, uncovered the origins of USCA, which precede the Civil War.

By reviewing the limited range of literature which is directly related to the central premise of this thesis, it has been determined that no scholarly paper comprehensively combines an understanding of how USCA and US strategic culture are intertwined and why the United States continues to return to cautious foreign policies following military intervention. This thesis asserts that the Vietnam War is credited with being the first extreme reaction by US society to its own military casualties. It is worth acknowledging here the deep cultural scars left by the Vietnam War.

58,220²³¹ US Americans lost their lives in military service in that campaign. The war was surrounded in controversy and deemed by a substantial number of US citizens to be an unnecessary war, thus, there were political, economic and generational consequences. Its legacy subsequently termed *Vietnam Syndrome*, a phrase used by elite citizens, political commentators and examined by scholars. A concise definition, however, remained elusive until now. In addition, Vietnam Syndrome does not fully account for the origins of USCA.

Through extensive research and analysis, this thesis presents an original and considered view of why the United States keeps returning to cautious foreign policies following military operations. Furthermore, this work provides a valuable contribution to the theory of strategic culture and international relations. Later chapters illustrate how USCA is deeply rooted in US culture, society, principles and collective thinking. In addition, rather than considering USCA and US strategic culture as separate entities; these chapters examine how USCA and US strategic culture are interlinked, and how USCA is an important element of US strategic culture, albeit as an understated element.

²³¹ National Archives, *Vietnam War U.S. Military Fatal Casualty Statistics*.
<https://www.archives.gov/research/military/vietnam-war/casualty-statistics#category> [Accessed 15/07/2020].

Chapter 3: Strategic Culture Reviewed

This thesis is not merely stating that US citizens tend to be casualty averse; rather that USCA has been embedded into US society, culture and ultimately into its strategic culture. It has gone unnoticed, been dismissed or mistakenly identified. The literature review reaffirmed that there is a small group of scholars who have begun a process of providing insight and scholarly contributions into understanding the United States' ongoing plight to reduce its own casualty numbers during military engagements. Until now, USCA has been poorly understood due to its discreet cultural and historical patterns; particularly its assimilation into elite thinking. Despite its pervasiveness, among elite groups in particular, USCA almost goes unnoticed as a cultural driver, to the extent that specific events such as the Vietnam War produced their own discrete 'syndromes' when in fact, as this thesis will show, the 'syndromes' are not discrete but in fact a manifestation of a long-standing and deep-rooted culture phenomenon. To fully understand USCA, Chapter Three provides a concise analysis of the theory of strategic culture and highlights some of the key traits of the US strategic culture, which have subtly ushered USCA into US society and affirmed its presence throughout US history.

Defining Culture

Samuel P. Huntington noted that culture was associated with a society's human traits and referred to peoples' "language, religious beliefs, social and political values, assumptions as to what is right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, and to the objective institutions and behavioral patterns that reflect these subjective elements."¹ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, author and feminist scholar, stated that "culture does not make people. People make culture."² The scholar Brené Brown frequently refers to the complex definitions of culture in her work. For Brown, "culture is the way we do things around here,"³ an idea which is drawn from the work of Terrence Deal and Allan Kennedy who pioneered organisational development. The anthropologist Leslie A. White proposed: "Culture is not basically anything. Culture is a word concept. It is man-made and may be used arbitrarily to designate anything we may define."⁴ Isabel V. Hull wrote that we are all "cultural creatures."⁵ Hull promoted Edgar Schein's observation that "The power of culture is derived from the fact that it operates as a set of assumptions that are unconscious and taken for granted."⁶

¹ S.P. Huntington, *WHO ARE WE? America's Great Debate* (London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd. 2004), 30.

² C.N. Adichie, *We should all be Feminists* (London: Fourth Estate/HarperCollins Publishers. 2014), 46.

³ B. Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent and lead* (London: Penguin Books Ltd. 2012), 174.

⁴ C.S. Gray, *Strategy and History: Essays on theory and practice* (London & New York: Routledge. 2006), 155.

⁵ I.V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction* (U.S.A. Cornell University Press, Cornell Paperbacks. 2006), 329.

⁶ *Ibid.* 95.

For Hull:

Culture defines and therefore, narrows perceptions and by reducing alternatives, makes it easier for individuals and organizations to define tasks and make decisions. This strength can also be a weakness, however. It can lead to rigid thinking, to 'collective blindness to important issues,' to a reluctance to seek further information, and to unrealistic assessments.⁷

Hull added:

Basic assumptions are the products of historical experience... meaning they are functions of social processes rather than of rigorous procedures of thinking. Their rationality lies in their social history.⁸

Gray established his concept of culture from the definition of the sociologist Raymond Williams, who understood culture to be a "description of a particular way of life which finds expression in institutions and ordinary behaviour."⁹ Gray interpreted culture as "ideals, it is the evidence of ideas, and it is behaviour."¹⁰ Later he added that culture was about "identity and our loyalties. It is what we have learned about ourselves, our society and state, and the world, and it is about *how* we have learned to approach those vital matters."¹¹ As noted in the methodology, Gray applied this formula of culture to examine, "culture in a community's ideals, in its ideas as revealed by its documents and other artifacts, and in its behavior."¹² Gray continually suggested it is helpful to ask, "what does culture do?"¹³

Gray was keen to incorporate behaviour within the scope of culture. For Gray culture refers to, "acquired or learned characteristics,"¹⁴ and the concept of culture refers to:

ideals, attitudes, ideas, habits of mind, and, somewhat controversially, behaviour. The essential feature of culture, its nature... it is learned and not genetically inherited. So, culture can change. But if we describe a prominent feature of national or tribal behaviour as cultural,

⁷ Ibid., 96.

⁸ Ibid., 97.

⁹ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 132.

¹⁰ Ibid., 132.

¹¹ Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 89.

¹² Gray, 'Out of the Wilderness', 1-20: 8.

¹³ Ibid., 1-20: 8.

¹⁴ Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 58.

we mean that it is deep rooted and does not express merely the passing fancy of the moment.¹⁵

Defining Strategic Culture

Good strategy, according to Gray, should be formulated with “good anthropology and sociology,”¹⁶ and “culture cannot be understood without knowing its history.”¹⁷ As a “theory for action,”¹⁸ strategic culture draws together cultural and historical theoretical analysis. Gray’s definition of strategic culture is applied; Gray endorsed Jack Snyder’s 1977 definition (with one minor amendment to accommodate strategic context), “to help keep us glued to the plot.”¹⁹

Snyder defined strategic culture as:

the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to [nuclear] strategy. In the area of strategy, habitual behavior is largely cognitive behavior.²⁰

Mackubin Thomas Owens summarised strategic culture as:

a distinctive body of beliefs and attitudes of a polity regarding the use of force, which, although persistent over time, can alter, either fundamentally or piecemeal, at critical junctures in its history. More narrowly, strategic culture can be seen as the traditional practices and habits of thought by which a society or polity organizes and employs its military force in the service of its political goals.²¹

In the study of ‘others’, a shared history must not be assumed or taken for granted, as it is, “conceived and experienced very differently in the culturally separate provinces of world society.”²²

¹⁵ Ibid., 88.

¹⁶ Gray, ‘Out of the Wilderness’, 1-20: 2.

¹⁷ A.B. Bozeman, *Politics & Culture in International History*, 2nd edition (New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers. 2004), xli.

¹⁸ B. Brodie, *War & Politics* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. 1973), 452.

¹⁹ Gray, ‘Out of the Wilderness’, 1-20: 6.

²⁰ Ibid., 6.

²¹ M. T. Owens, *Colin Gray: The Strategist’s Strategist*. 8 June 2020. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/06/colin-gray-the-strategists-strategist> [Accessed 20/12/2020].

²² Bozeman, *Politics & Culture*, xxxix.

Scholars are required to remember, history is not “a shared international experience”²³ as there is not an “interdependence of all nations and cultures.”²⁴

As a society evolves, so too does its culture through collective and distinctive traditions, values, thinking and traits which are influenced by its circumstances. These same traditions and values are also translated into its governmental and social institutions, which are then incorporated into its delivery of its foreign policy. Gray explained that “strategic culture is not only ‘out there’, it is also within us: we, our institutions, and our behaviour are in the context.”²⁵

Similarly, Isabel V. Hull examined military practices and the basic assumptions behind them rather than ideology to gain deeper insights into military culture. Hull adapted anthropological and organisational-cultural methods to examine “habitual practices, default programs, hidden assumptions, and unreflected cognitive frames.”²⁶ For Hull, military culture was a particular variant of organisational culture and this perspective of social science was a valuable tool to “focus on patterns of cogitation and practice”²⁷ which informed a society’s basic assumptions. Importantly, Hull recognised “organizational culture is liable to produce irrationality and dysfunction because the lessons of the past may be a poor guide to problems of the present and because its most influential tenets are often subconscious, hidden, or taken for granted, and therefore difficult to correct.”²⁸

Significant observations by Gray include:

- “One can regard strategic culture as being in good measure socially constructed by both people and institutions, which proceed to behave to some degree culturally.”²⁹
- “Assumptions, largely unspoken and unwritten, that are the foundation for, though not the sole determinants of, our judgments,”³⁰ though they do yield some truths “...small and large, that we know should guide our decisions and actions.”³¹
- “There are serious reasons, rooted in local perceptions of historical experience and in a community’s geopolitical context, why a country’s strategic culture is what it is.”³²

²³ Ibid., 17.

²⁴ Ibid., 17.

²⁵ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 133.

²⁶ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 2.

²⁷ Ibid., 92.

²⁸ Ibid., 92.

²⁹ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 130.

³⁰ Gray, ‘Out of the Wilderness’, 1-20: 8.

³¹ Ibid., 8.

³² Ibid., 17.

- Examining these encourages “core questions about the roots of, and influences upon, strategic behaviour.”³³
- Strategic culture is related to but not the same as “national style” or “a way of war.”³⁴

Gray proposed two contexts for strategic culture:

- Firstly, “culture as context provides meaning of events.”³⁵
- Secondly, “the human hosts of strategic culture are inalienably part of their own strategic context.”³⁶

Strategic culture functions on two levels:

- Firstly, as a “prime mover of thought, judgement, policy, and all that follows there from.”³⁷
- Secondly, “it must always be present as an actual, or potential, influence on our decisions and behavior.”³⁸

To maintain consistency, this thesis is founded on Gray’s definition and understanding of the theory of strategic culture.

A Critique of Strategic Culture

All theories are contested in a “fictional universe.”³⁹ Theoretical comparisons with realist and geopolitical theories form the foundation for this critique; and as Gray was a prominent advocate of the theory of strategic culture, criticism tended to be directed toward his work. Backed up by his extensive knowledge of international relations, political philosophy and history; in his teaching he suggested that those who criticised strategic culture had failed to appreciate its nuances. As a realist, Gray sought to review the caveats of strategic culture. For example, he acknowledged that Clausewitz reminded the strategist that war is a duel and “statecraft and warfare inherently is directly competitive behaviour, necessity can drive a country to act in a way that is contrary to its political and strategic culture.”⁴⁰ Pragmatically, he accepted that a society may contain more than

³³ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 130.

³⁴ Owens, *Colin Gray: The Strategist’s Strategist*.

³⁵ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 129.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 129.

³⁷ Gray, ‘Out of the Wilderness’, 1-20: 9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁰ Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 89.

one strategic culture “just as there are military cultures associated with particular missions or geographical environments.”⁴¹

Theoretical discord remains. Firstly, on the degree to which a state can change its culture and secondly; its methodology for doing so. Gray stipulated that “culture does not change frequently or, usually, radically. If it did, it would not be culture.”⁴² Echevarria observed: “While all cultures are surely unique in some respects, the historical record shows that their modes of thinking are not necessarily insular, Russian and Western cultures, for instance, despite many obvious differences.”⁴³

Certainly, there has been interaction between states throughout the histories of Europe and Northern America nations; sharing through their artistic and cultural expressions, religion, politics and military experiences. Samuel P. Huntington claimed that “one can, however, change one’s culture.”⁴⁴ Huntington’s justification was that: “People convert from one religion to another, learn new languages, adopt new values and beliefs, identify with new symbols and accommodate themselves to new ways of life. The culture of a younger generation often differs along many of these dimensions from that of the previous generation.”⁴⁵ In practice, the challenges faced by an individual changing their culture are more manageable than those faced by a state changing theirs.

Gray accepted, as does this thesis, that over time a culture can evolve. A “new experience is absorbed, coded, and culturally translated.”⁴⁶ This does not necessitate a whole seismic cultural change, since for a nation’s culture to change extensively, an assault is required, a “traumatic shock of sufficient awesomeness.”⁴⁷ This is possible and has happened, though as Gray pointed out, even under these circumstances “when security communities benefit from the diffusion of useful strategic ideas and technologies, they are likely to choose to benefit in ways distinctive to themselves.”⁴⁸ Neither the individual nor the society chooses their strategic cultures, rather “their strategic cultures choose them. There is a marriage between a society’s strategic need and the culture that seems best to meet that need.”⁴⁹ An example could be September 11, 2001, which was deemed to be a significant catalyst in reforming the *American way of war* and overcoming its

⁴¹ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 131.

⁴² Gray, ‘Out of the Wilderness’, 1-20: 14.

⁴³ A.J. Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War* (Washington DC, Georgetown University Press. 2014), 33.

⁴⁴ Huntington, *WHO ARE WE?*, 31.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴⁶ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 131-132.

⁴⁷ Gray, ‘Out of the Wilderness’, 1-20: 14.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

casualty aversion. However, the United States promptly reverted back to the implementation of USCA, which is deeply ingrained in its strategic thinking.

This thesis is inclined to agree with Gray:

- A constantly changing culture is not a culture.
- Cultures may evolve, but their core characteristics and values will remain.

Gray cautioned that styles of behaviour are not stereotypes and must not be confused as being so, while Bernard Brodie reminded scholars that Clausewitz wrote “a great book... and its purpose... was to provide generalizations.”⁵⁰ Critics of strategic culture continue to comment on its lack of empirical data and its reliance on generalisations. Alastair Iain Johnston was steadfast in his view:

In policy terms, the notion of strategic culture leaves open the possibility that strategic preferences and state interests are somewhat more amenable to purposive change than structural realists might assume, even though cross-national studies may conclude that cultural *realpolitik* is a handy norm in international relations.⁵¹

Michael C. Desch cautioned against the use of cultural variables to explain strategic behaviour, arguing that the ‘culturalists’ claimed too much and “its impact on the actual conduct of the war is debatable, it is clear that ‘national charter’ played an enormous role in the public discourse concerning the nature of the enemy.”⁵² Antulio J. Echevarria, considered the definition of culture and strategic culture to be too broad and its apparent lack of clarity a hindrance. He also unfairly suggested its study had “diverted worthy endeavours from other topics.”⁵³ Benjamin Buley understood strategic culture to be a broad concept which “encompasses the wider society’s understanding of war.”⁵⁴ He deliberately narrowed his definition and adopted the term ‘military culture’ to overcome what he saw to be a ‘potential issue’ of relying on generalisations. He defined it as the “basic assumptions about war of those groups within the wider society who are *professionally concerned with the use of military force*, whether they be uniformed military servicemen or civilian strategists.”⁵⁵ Gray conceded that Johnston’s paper was methodologically secure and lacked fault, although contested whether it had served its intended purpose: “We cannot

⁵⁰ Brodie, *War & Politics*, 447.

⁵¹ A.I. Johnston, Thinking about Strategic Culture, *International Security*, 19, 4 (1995), 32-64: 63.

⁵² M.C. Desch, Culture Clash: Assessing the importance of ideas in security studies, *International Security Studies*, 23, 1 (1998), 41-170: 145.

⁵³ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way*, 35.

⁵⁴ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

understand strategic behaviour by that method... Strategic culture is not only 'out there,' also it is within us; we, our institutions, and our behavior are the context."⁵⁶ Johnston's work was carefully considered during this research process and his concluding thoughts were noted:

- "Done well, the careful analysis of strategic culture could help policymakers establish more accurate and empathetic understandings of how different actors perceive the game being played, reducing uncertainty and other information problems in strategic choice."⁵⁷
- "Done badly, the analysis of strategic culture could reinforce stereotypes about the strategic predispositions of other states and close off policy alternatives deemed inappropriate for dealing with local strategic cultures."⁵⁸

For Gray, "The traffic between ideas and behavior in strategic affairs is continuous, hence my preference for the idea that context is more about 'that which weaves together,' than it is about 'that which surrounds.'"⁵⁹ Johnston asserted that a nation may have several strategic cultures, as culture evolves and a "strategic culture may comprise more a litany of canonical idealised beliefs than a set of attitudes, perspectives, and preferences that are operational as real guides of action."⁶⁰

However, Gray chose to group strategy dimensions into three clusters:

- The first category, 'People and politics,' comprises people, society, culture, politics, and ethics.
- The second category, 'Preparation for war,' accommodates economics and logistics; organisation (including defence, force, and more directly, war planning), military preparation and administration (including recruitment, training, and many aspects of armament), information and intelligence, strategic theory and doctrine, and technology.
- The third category, 'War proper,' groups military operations, command (political and military) geography, friction (including chance and uncertainty), the adversary, and time.⁶¹

Johnston considered behaviour to be separate, though for Gray this did not work. Gray saw it as an unnecessary complexity to assess behaviour and culture separately. Instead, Gray advocated that behaviour, culture and subcultures were interwoven and wrote, "In the practical world of strategy,

⁵⁶ Gray, *Strategy and History*, 154.

⁵⁷ Johnston, 'Thinking about Strategic Culture', 32-64: 63-4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-64: 63-4.

⁵⁹ Gray, *Strategy and History*, 155.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

strategic ideas apply to strategic experience, while strategic experience constitutes ideas in action, albeit as modified by constraints of imperfect practice.”⁶² Even those with sub-cultures and internal diversity were accommodated as they too were formed with the same particulars. Collectively, culturalist scholars are inclined to agree, and there are three distinct areas of study: Public Culture, Strategic Culture and Military (Organisational) Culture. For Gray, the work was unfinished until the three were connected.

Strategic Culture and Realism: Collaboration

Realist theorists continually assert that their strict referencing of interactions between political entities and their insights into international relations are authoritative. This thesis highlights the issue of seeking a complete account of a decision taken by a nation of interest, if their domestic processes have not been examined. Additionally, this thesis supports the view that strategic culture should not be seen as competing with or emulating other theories, and should be considered as an enrichment to scholarly theories of statecraft and international relations. This thesis considers consolidating elements of realism with strategic culture as they complement each other in seeking clarity to understanding a state and its interactions.

Though it is not customary to merge branches of learning and their theories, this practice is not new. Due to the complexity of understanding strategy, the theory of strategic culture instructs scholars to combine and examine a nation’s history, political and social structure and geography. When this approach is applied to theories within a branch of learning, this merging provides scholars with an enhanced understanding. Harold W. Rood was an early advocate of merging theories, though he self-identified as a ‘classical realist’. He believed war was the one certainty in international relations and there were no times ‘of peace’ or ‘post-war’, rather there was either war or preparation for war, and to win required preparation. Rood understood that “the study of politics constitutes a study of history; it is something made possible and useful because human nature exists and is unchanging.”⁶³ Like Rood, Gray too was a ‘realist’ and all his students were required to read Thucydides and *On War* by Carl von Clausewitz.

From a ‘realist’ perspective, Gray suggested that:

- Human nature is governed by self-interest and fear.

⁶² Ibid., 155.

⁶³ J.D. Crouch & P. J. Garrity, *You Run the Show or the Show Runs You: Capturing Professor Harold W. Rood’s Strategic Thought for a New Generation* (London & New York: Rowman & Littlefield. 2015), 21.

- Power and military security is of utmost importance.
- The state is the central actor in the international arena.
- Honour, fear and interest are a state's primary motivating factors.
- "Bad times return."⁶⁴
- "One can either plan for bad times or trust to chance and uncertainty."⁶⁵

Gray differed from other realists when he attributed state behaviour to its national style and strategic culture. Gray acknowledged geopolitics and observed the political and security differences between the sea and land powers; and was steadfast in his belief there is a strategic advantage of sea power. Gray also advised in the mid-2000s that culture is not necessarily "the prime determinant of decision and action."⁶⁶ Yet, he also understood factors such as "chance, friction, fear, the fog of war, and sheer incompetence, may well be more important in the shaping of events than is strategic and military culture."⁶⁷

Mackubin Thomas Owens's review of Gray added:

It is a mistake to attempt to reduce strategy to a single aspect, although it is not unusual for writers on strategy to try. Clausewitz dismissed as simplistic the reduction of strategy to "principles, rules, or even systems," because, on the contrary, strategy "involves human passions, values, and beliefs, few of which are quantifiable."⁶⁸

Consolidating strategic culture and realism is important. It is essential to understand where power and influence is held in the international system but it is also important to understand the internal workings of a nation and who is advocating for them. To ignore these leaves nations at risk of projecting mirror-image behaviour, leading to misunderstandings, mistrust, a break-down of politics and frequent occurrences of flash points. All of which should be avoided as war becomes one step closer.

The Elite Citizen

Understanding how a state interacts with other states is incredibly important work for the theory of strategic culture, likewise this thesis author considers the individual as an important factor within

⁶⁴ Owens, *Colin Gray: The Strategist's Strategist*.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Gray, 'Out of the Wilderness', 1-20: 5.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁶⁸ Owens, *Colin Gray: The Strategist's Strategist*.

these processes, despite the value of an individual's input being under-valued in scholarly theory. This is not to say it has not been recognised, for example Bernard Brodie stated that “every war is rich in individual phenomena.”⁶⁹ Jack L. Snyder also acknowledged that “individuals are socialized into distinctively Soviet modes of strategic thinking. As a result of this socialization process, a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural patterns.”⁷⁰ Snyder also linked the process of socialisation to the theory of strategic culture when he noted that “the term ‘culture’ is used to suggest that these beliefs tend to be perpetuated by the socialization of individuals into a distinctive mode of thinking.”⁷¹ This thesis has extended its remit to include the socialisation process of the elite individual and has assessed previously overlooked comments, notes and contributions related to examining the individual within political concepts and systems.

Colin S. Gray recognised that “individuals do count, even in the politics of security at the highest level.”⁷² He also conceded there is an integral link between strategic culture and patterns of behaviour when he wrote that “just as all strategy has to be ‘done’ by operations which consist of tactical behaviour, so all strategic, operational, and tactical behavior is ‘done’ by people and organizations that have been uncultured supra-nationally, nationally, or sub-nationally.”⁷³ Communities provide humans with security and there is no choice in undergoing strategic enculturation. The human behaves strategically under cultural influence and as “human beings are agents of culture, helping to shape their strategic environment according to such of their cultural preferences as circumstances permit,”⁷⁴ effectively forming a society and their socialisation process.

Rood taught that humans “naturally seek to organize their environment to provide a sense of control and order.”⁷⁵ He regarded the immutable aspects of international politics to be human nature, geography, physical constraints and “the ‘constitutional arrangements’ through which men seek to control and govern their environment, and the inner logic of historical themes as they interact with others in the sphere of politics.”⁷⁶ Rood considered peace, justice and defence as being paramount for a political community and this was achieved through, what he called “the ‘small c’ constitution, what they actually did and how they did it.”⁷⁷ To understand the orderly progression from cause to

⁶⁹ Brodie, *War & Politics*, 447.

⁷⁰ Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*, v.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁷² Gray, *The Sheriff*, 48.

⁷³ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 135.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁷⁵ Crouch & Garrity, *You Run the Show*, 11.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

consequences, “strategy involves an appreciation of human agency in the broadest sense, that of a fixed and understandable human nature.”⁷⁸

The case for the inclusion of elite individuals was furthered in 2004 by Bozeman who remarked: “In short, the appellation ‘state’ tells you nothing nowadays.”⁷⁹ Preceding these remarks the concept of warfare was changing with the significant growth in global terrorism and the emergence of transient fighters. Theoretically, this divergence does not render a states' strategic culture unworthy of review, rather, to assist in formulating a coherent strategy it is important to ascertain their aggressors' national identity or identities, to enable a review of their socialisation processes along with their states' strategic culture.

This thesis argues that an accurate and complete account of a states' strategic culture can only be completed after its concepts and systems; along with its participants' secondary socialisation are analysed.

In the context of this thesis:

- A complete account of the United States strategic culture is required to fully understand how USCA is embedded and intertwined in its strategic culture.
- Elite individuals were selected based on their contributions to the United States national narrative; for example, working on key documents or input during key historical junctures and their contributions to the national narrative. U.S. statecraft and policies emerge and as it is the elite individual who formulates and implements them, an examination of who they are provides invaluable insight into these decision-making processes.

Cultural habits, beliefs and patterns of behaviour can be identified by examining a society's processes of socialising their citizens. Further insight can be gained by examining the socialisation and experiences of a nation's elite policy makers. In the context of US strategic culture, USCA is subtly embedded in the thinking of its citizens through their secondary socialisation. In turn, as the citizen participates within their society, they form part of the following generations' socialisation.

The discrete nature of USCA means that it remains unnoticed until the full breadth of the United States history is reviewed and combined with a review of its culture and society; and the elite's individual socialisation process.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁹ Bozeman, *Politics & Culture in International History*, xli.

US Strategic Culture & Casualty Aversion

Pre-existing scholarly links between strategic culture and USCA are so rare that in September 2011, Colin S. Gray was asked to offer his opinions on why the US political system was unusually casualty-averse during his time advising in the Reagan administration. Gray responded briefly:

I can say that it is my humble opinion that Americans do not have a history of being casualty shy when they cared deeply about the issues they believed were at stake – the qualifying phrase is critical. The past 20 years do not really count in regard to attitudes to casualties, because the U.S. has only waged wars of discretion except for the brief episode of a raiding take-down of the Taliban in 2001. I only have opinions on this matter, no scholarly expertise.⁸⁰

Although Gray considered himself to have no scholarly expertise and was cautiously non-committal on the matter of USCA, his opinion did matter as he specialised in the theory of strategic culture and specifically the United States one. Gray's publication *The Sheriff: America's Defense of the New World Order* (2004) "raised questions about the ability of American strategic culture to enable the United States to do its job as a global hegemonic power."⁸¹

Addressing the "risk-averse" character of the United States, Gray's comments included:

- "Far too much has been made of the alleged casualty-shyness of Americans today. Americans have been sensibly casualty-shy when they feel less than deeply engaged in the political contexts of the issue."⁸²
- "In a popular democracy, foreign policy must first work at home if it is ever to be tried seriously abroad."⁸³
- "The connection to American interests will have to be made very explicit, indeed, if military action is to be justifiable."⁸⁴
- "The American public is probably nowhere near as casualty-shy as popular mythology insists, though the same cannot be said with equal confidence of the professional American military."⁸⁵

⁸⁰ C. S. Gray [Email] correspondence between T. Kane & C. Fenton. September 20, 2011.

⁸¹ Owens, *Colin Gray: The Strategist's Strategist*.

⁸² Gray, *The Sheriff*: 128.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 140-141.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

- “If it is true that the risk aversion so characteristic of American society finds its due reflection in the military establishment, America’s armed forces, transformed or not, will not be anywhere near as lethal a strategic policy instrument as the country is sure to need.”⁸⁶

Gray’s solution was for the United States to “adopt a style of warfare that imposes few costs on American society, especially in the most human of dimensions—casualties.”⁸⁷ Gray cautiously added that “war is a duel, the United States’ ability to perform all but painlessly as sheriff can never lie totally within its own control,”⁸⁸ and acknowledged that “a reluctant domestic public should be eased if care is taken in selecting policy duties and if troops who must execute the strategy are tactically competent.”⁸⁹ Gray did not examine USCA and its implementation any further, even in the instances in which military action was deemed a necessity; however this thesis chose to, and by asking ‘why’ reveals how deeply and subtly embedded USCA is in US culture and society, and how it has consequently been overlooked in the context of US strategic culture.

The following subsections identify and summarise the components and cultural traits of the United States’ strategic culture that are informed by USCA. This thesis acknowledges that these are not necessarily unique to US strategic culture. Finally – our definition of culture as something with permanence and continuity should not be conflated with temporal trends that occasionally rise to the surface of popular culture.

Freedom of Press & Speech

US Congress ratified Amendment 1 – Freedom of Religion, Press and Speech to its constitution under the Bill of Rights on December 15 1791. It states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievance.”⁹⁰

The freedom of press and speech is deeply embedded in US society and proudly maintained by its elite citizens because it has been regarded as their ‘voice’. Long before independence from the British, Americans were promoting the importance of learning and literacy, notably in the city of

⁸⁶ Ibid., 128.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 95.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 95.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 95.

⁹⁰ U.S. Constitution, Amendment 1. Available online: <https://www.usconstitution.net/xconstAm1.html> [Accessed 17/08/2018].

Boston, which established grammar schools, colleges and libraries as early as 1635. Bostonian society “prided itself on its civic culture”⁹¹ and was “book-crazy, news hungry, astonishingly literate (70 per cent men and 45 per cent for women), habitually litigious, with a strong religious disposition to see the world in terms of the embattled forces of good and evil.”⁹² Over time, presidential administrations have utilised the press to highlight their policies; whilst journalists still consider themselves to be an essential part of the accountability process and maintenance of the United States democratic principles by producing informative copy; though, the press’s ability to influence and shape public opinion continues to generate debate.

In the context of the use of US military forces, professional journalists have reported on military operations since the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). An examination of this historical timeline reveals strained relationships between the press and presidential administrations prior to intervention; a tension which is often heightened during the intervention itself. Robert K. Brigham noted that “every Vietnam-era president complained the media were against him and were reporting events unfairly.”⁹³ Press coverage has even become a consideration for implementing military force or not. During the 1990s Richard Holbrooke observed: “No question was more sensitive in the government than how to deal with the press.”⁹⁴

There are numerous studies which have reviewed the relationship between the media and US foreign policy as technological developments in radio, cinematography, television and social media have changed citizens' accessibility. For example, it should not be overlooked that the Vietnam war was the first televised war. Affordable television culminated in images of war being projected into homes across the United States. As awareness and controversy grew within the wider populace, the media continued with increased coverage from journalists in Vietnam who had accessed the front lines and were uncensored.

Melvin Robert Laird (Secretary of Defense 1969-1973) believed that the dramatic nature of press coverage in Vietnam originated as “there were many journalists who were completely new to war and therefore, in their reports reproduced much of the shock they felt.”⁹⁵ The televised images revealed the true horrors of warfare and included images of coffins being repatriated; this coverage

⁹¹ S. Schama, *A History of Britain 2: 1603-1776 The British Wars*, 2nd edition (London: BBC Worldwide Ltd. 2001), 369.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 369.

⁹³ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 111.

⁹⁴ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 58.

⁹⁵ Hudson & Stanier, *War and the Media*, 310.

significantly impacted US individuals, helping to shape their opinions on the war. Laird also highlighted that until the war in Vietnam, “families back home worried about the welfare of their soldiers but could not see the danger. Had mothers and fathers of US soldiers serving in World War II seen real-time CNN reports of D-day in the style of *Saving Private Ryan*, they might not have thought Europe was worth saving.”⁹⁶ Naturally, “reading about death and destruction is one thing: actually, seeing it with your eyes is quite another.”⁹⁷

A further example is the ‘CNN effect’ and the outcomes of “fighting a war as it was being reported.”⁹⁸ Building on previous scholarly reviews, this thesis notes that “much of the evidence for the impact is speculative and heavily intertwined with other causes,”⁹⁹ and that the free press is not the sole cause of USCA, rather it has helped to embed USCA in the United States' strategic culture. Since the conclusion of the Vietnam War, USCA has become an overt consideration, and the free press has consistently contributed to the implementation and sustaining of USCA in US culture and society.

Press coverage was an important consideration in the planning of Operation Desert Storm (Kuwait 1990-1991). The consideration and planning were influenced by the Vietnam War and Operation Just Cause (Panama 1989-1990). Colin L. Powell’s experience of the press arrangements for Panama were woeful and as a consequence “the press ate us alive, with some justification.”¹⁰⁰ The DOD acknowledged they were slow in getting the press to Panama and had problems with their accommodation. However, for Powell and the DOD, the press crossed a line in their reporting. On day two the networks simultaneously showed a split screen of President Regan speaking with the press in an upbeat manner due to the quick success of the operation, alongside footage of the first US casualties being unloaded at Dover Air Force Base; “the effect was to make the President look callous.”¹⁰¹ A further observation and recommendation regarding the press from Powell was that if the press covers war, “there’s no way we can eliminate the risks of war.”¹⁰² Powell clearly understood that the United States could not be “pledged to free expression [and] simply turn off the press.”¹⁰³

⁹⁶ M.R. Laird, ‘Iraq: Learning the Lessons of Vietnam,’ *Foreign Affairs*, 84, 6 (2005), 22-43: 33.

⁹⁷ Hudson & Stanier, *War and the Media*, 104.

⁹⁸ C.L. Powell, *My American Journey* (New York: The Random House Ballantine Publishing Group. 1995), 431-432.

⁹⁹ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 18.

¹⁰⁰ Powell, *My American Journey*, 431.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 431.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 431.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 433.

The new reality of the press filing instantaneously had to first be accepted, and secondly to be managed:

- Press access to the battle field was strictly limited.
- The White House and DOD kept a 'tight lid' on all press dispatches through a central media output and decided which images were allowed to be broadcast in the United States.
- Press access was restricted for repatriations of fallen US military personnel.

These restrictions were implemented by the Executive Branch and DOD because of concerns over how the public would respond to US casualties (overt USCA). Inevitably frustrating the press, one journalist wrote, "It's ok to die for your country" but "the Pentagon just doesn't want anyone to know about it."¹⁰⁴ Press access to the repatriations of US fallen and injured personnel continues to be contentious, as presidential administrations implement different protocols.

The former national security advisor Anthony Laker remarked in the 1990s that "American foreign policy is increasingly driven by where CNN points its cameras."¹⁰⁵ Laker's statement remains as relevant today; and though the media platforms have changed, the press and social media continue to direct the general population's attention to overseas crises. Operation Restore Hope (Dec 1992-May 1993) serves as an important case study in demonstrating how the free press can influence US foreign policy. US news outlets aired images of a humanitarian crisis caused by Somalia's civil war and gave a voice to the public opinion that supported humanitarian assistance. At the UN Security Council's 3145th meeting, December 3, 1992, the United States supported the adoption of Resolution 794. Its intent was "to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia."¹⁰⁶

Though the United States supported Resolution 794 prior to 1992, there was no precedent for US military involvement in humanitarian operations on the African continent and President George H.W. Bush's administration "hoped that the intervention would be short and bloodless: indeed, that was one of the premises upon which they took the decision to intervene."¹⁰⁷ US military fatalities totalled forty-three in Somalia and during the Black Sea Mission/the Battle of Mogadishu, October

¹⁰⁴ Herring, 'Preparing not to refight the last war', 56-84: 76.

¹⁰⁵ M. G. Pounder, 'Opportunity Lost Public Affairs, Information Operations, and the Air War against Serbia.', *Aerospace Power Journal*, (2000), 56-78: 62.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Resolution 794, Paragraph 10, 1992. The United Nations Website-Security Council documents. http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/794%281992%29 [Accessed 29/03/2016].

¹⁰⁷ Hudson & J. Stanier, *War and the Media*, 255.

3-4, 1993, eighteen US military personnel were killed; seventy-seven were wounded and the Black Hawk pilot, Michael Durant, was held captive for 11 days.

Prior to the Black Sea Mission, the US press outlets had removed all of their personnel due to safety concerns (overt USCA). However, footage was recorded by a reporter from the *Toronto Star* and was later released to the US news outlets. Included in the footage were images of an US soldier's body being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu and what appeared to be "gleeful Somalis abusing American corpses."¹⁰⁸ These levels of violence had not been anticipated and opinion quickly changed; the press reported the public view of wanting to bring troops home. Richard Cohen at the *Washington Post* wrote: "If we cannot save Somalia from itself, then it is best we at least save ourselves and bring the troops home."¹⁰⁹ On October 7, 1993, President B. Clinton announced the withdrawal of all US troops from Somalia by March 31, 1994. The "commanding power of the media – which (arguably) had led the United States into Somalia – now echoed the drumbeat for an American withdrawal,"¹¹⁰ and again the Somali experience "underscored the need for few casualties as a condition of any use of force."¹¹¹ Hilary R. Clinton wrote in 2014: "For Americans, the name Somalia conjures up painful memories."¹¹² It had become "a lasting symbol of the dangers of American involvement in messy global hotspots."¹¹³

As US Ambassador to Germany, Richard Holbrooke described how after visiting the wounded "the raw courage and patriotism of those young men, several of whom had lost their sight or limbs during the fighting, were still vivid in my mind."¹¹⁴ Holbrooke later in life recalled this as an unforgettable moment and began to use the term 'Vietmalia Syndrome' to describe USCA. A DOD analyst later disclosed that the military reaction was so strong to the outcomes of the battle in Mogadishu (lasting a matter of hours) that it had "in many respects had a bigger impact on military thinking than the entire 1991 Persian Gulf war."¹¹⁵ General Colin S. Powell observed: "It speaks well of America that our threshold for death and injury to our soldiers has been so significantly lowered. This does not mean that military action is never worth the danger or the price."¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁸ M. Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A story of Modern War* (New York: Penguin Books. 1999), 333.

¹⁰⁹ Hudson & Stanier, *War and the Media*, 259.

¹¹⁰ Pounder, 'Opportunity Lost', 56-78: 62.

¹¹¹ Stevenson, 'The Evolving Clinton Doctrine on the Use of Force,' *Armed Forces & Society*, 22, 4 (1996), 526.

¹¹² Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 286.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 286.

¹¹⁴ Holbrooke, 17.

¹¹⁵ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows the War*, 91.

¹¹⁶ Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 497.

Though the US remained diplomatically supportive of humanitarian aid, it was reluctant to commit US troops to Africa, profoundly affecting its response to the civil war in Rwanda in 1994. Isaacs wrote in 1997 that Somalia had created a “reverse domino theory,”¹¹⁷ which would have been an engaging proposition if USCA had not already been established and deeply rooted in US strategic culture before 1992, as demonstrated in this thesis. Just as press coverage had advanced the cause for intervention in Somalia, initiating Operation Restore Hope, press coverage also triggered a rapid waning of public support (public opinion is detailed below), and the ultimate conclusion of the operation, once the footage from the *Toronto Star* was released.

The Balkan crisis is a further example of the press advancing an international cause and later retracting its support. Richard Holbrooke credited the journalists Roy Gutman of *Newsday*, John Burns of the *New York Times*, Kurt Schork of Reuters and Christiane Amanpour of CNN, for alerting the US nation to the ethnic cleansing in Europe’s backyard by the Serbs in summer, 1992: “The terrible television pictures from Bosnia were deeply moving, but Americans needed to identify with an articulate Bosnian who could personalize his nation’s cause.”¹¹⁸ As a response to these early reports, Holbrooke made a personal visit to the Balkans. He later wrote that he had not seen a “problem so difficult or compelling”¹¹⁹ since the Vietnam war. Holbrooke described Sarajevo as a ‘hellhole’ and said that the two days spent there “left impressions for a lifetime.”¹²⁰ He used the press to provoke a wider discussion in the United States. On September 17, 1992, his article was circulated, controversially asking: “what would the West be doing now if the religious convictions of the combatants were reversed, and a Muslim force was now trying to destroy two million beleaguered Christians and/or Jews?”¹²¹

In a memorandum sent to Presidential candidate Bill Clinton, Holbrooke wrote: “This is not a choice between Vietnam and doing nothing, as the Bush Administration has portrayed it. There are many actions that might be done now, including: dropping the arms embargo against Bosnians, stationing UN observers along the Kosovo and Macedonia borders... Doing nothing now risks a far greater and more costly involvement later.”¹²² Samantha Power, who was a journalist in the Balkans, has since

¹¹⁷ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows the War*, 91.

¹¹⁸ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 35.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 42.

written that “‘Vietnam’ became the ubiquitous shorthand for all that could go wrong in the Balkans if the United States became militarily engaged.”¹²³

It is important to note:

- A free press is deeply embedded in US society and it sees its role as fundamentally to maintain democracy and voice the views of US citizens.
- Press coverage continues to be a political consideration when undertaking military action (the optics).
- Press coverage of warfare is not solely responsible for USCA.
- Press reporting of US casualty numbers reaffirms deeply embedded USCA.
- Press coverage of warfare has consistently contributed to instigating, implementing and sustaining USCA within US society, culture and ultimately its strategic culture.
- Mutual respect endures between the press and the Executive Branch/DOD despite new challenges to accurate reporting, especially due to advancements in media communications. Though the full impact of these fledging cultural shifts will not be fully understood for another generation.

Public Opinion

In the United States, public opinion is ingrained in its democratic institutions, processes, and national conversations. As a democracy, the United States asks its people to serve in its defence, hence people’s opinion is especially important when military intervention is under consideration. It would be irresponsible for the leaders of a democratic nation not to consider the cost of its casualties. In terms of scholarly literature, there is a substantial volume across a variety of academic fields (titles listed in bibliography) which support the premise that public opinion provides citizens with a ‘voice’ on important matters, notably related to the use of their military; and strategically, public opinion it is considered to be a US ‘centre of gravity’.

Despite public opinion pre-dating the Vietnam War, it is not surprising that studies have credited the Vietnam war as being a watershed moment for US public opinion and have accentuated a consensus that US society became casualty averse as a consequence. Even in 2014, Hilary H. Clinton acknowledged its influence, whilst a practitioner of US foreign policy: “As we learned in Vietnam, it’s very difficult to sustain a long and costly war without support from the US people and a spirit of

¹²³ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 155.

shared sacrifice.”¹²⁴ The fact that the Vietnam War “alienated so many of the most thoughtful, principled and influential figures in American public life testifies to the strain it put on the American republic.”¹²⁵

Empirical studies, a prominent example being ‘*Trends in Popular Support for Wars in Korea and Vietnam*’ by John E. Mueller (1971), highlighted the importance of US public opinion when considering the use of US troops for military intervention. They demonstrate that in both Korea and Vietnam, US public opinion displayed a malaise as ground operations continued and the US casualty count rose. This was reaffirmed in Mueller’s paper ‘The Iraq Syndrome’ (2005), which re-examined Korea, Vietnam and Iraq. Mueller concluded that the US “public opinion became a key factor in all three wars and in each one there has been a simple association: as casualties mount, support decreases. Broad enthusiasm at the outset invariably erodes.”¹²⁶ In the case of Iraq his results showed data that confirmed that, casualty for casualty, public support “declined far more quickly than it did during either the Korean War or the Vietnam War.”¹²⁷ Mueller believed that the low tolerance level for US casualties was due to the fact Americans placed “far less value on the stakes in Iraq than it did on those in Korea and Vietnam.”¹²⁸

During the Vietnam war, political elites became more conscious of their positions being dependent on the public, and that unpopular foreign policies could determine election results. President Lyndon B. Johnson infamously said: “If we have lost Walter [Cronkite] we have lost middle America.”¹²⁹ Public opinion highlighted middle-class America’s USCA as they were uncomfortable and “deeply affected by the reality of pain, fear and anguish.”¹³⁰

Chang Jin Park (1975) wrote in his comparative case study of Korea and Vietnam:

[A] democratic political system such as the United States may not be best equipped to fight an indecisive and prolonged war of national liberation in which the identity of the enemy is highly elusive. The democratic political system finds it difficult to counter wars of national liberation because of easily divisive public opinion, public impatience with the protracted

¹²⁴ Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 136.

¹²⁵ T. M. Kane, *Theoretical Roots of US Foreign Policy* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), 107.

¹²⁶ Mueller, ‘The Iraq Syndrome’, 44-54: 44.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 44-54: 44.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 44-54: 45.

¹²⁹ Hudson & Stanier, *War and the Media*, 305.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

process of war, and inevitably ambiguous national goals in prosecuting such a war against an elusive enemy.¹³¹

A poll conducted “shortly before the fall of Saigon reported that only a third of all US Americans were willing to support the defense of the Berlin militarily... [Scepticism] about military intervention was so pervasive that it achieved the status of a syndrome - the ‘Vietnam syndrome.’”¹³² The latter half of the decade recorded an all-time low in US public opinion, though this can be attributed to a number of collaborating factors; the aftermath of Vietnam being only one. Low opinion poll data did influence President J. Carter’s administration policies, and it is documented that members of his team and elite officials at the DOD actively avoided military interventions requiring US troops; as they understood how despondent the US people were to military action (overt implementation of USCA by President J. Carter’s administration are provided in Chapter Six).

Looking back through the timeline to the Korean War there is an established pattern: as a general rule “climbing casualty rates are likely to reduce public support for a war except in conflicts in which the stakes are so great the populace will pay virtually any price to avoid defeat.”¹³³ With a particular focus on the 1990s, Blechman and Cofman Wittes (1999) provided a detailed examination of US public opinion. They too subscribed to the narrative of the US public’s “sensitivity to the human and economic costs of military action is a clear legacy of the Vietnam experience.”¹³⁴ They highlighted that even with military superiority, US diplomatic objectives were becoming increasingly difficult to achieve because it was rare to be able to sustain public opinion whilst threatening adversaries with military force as “potent threats imply greater risks.”¹³⁵

Public opinion is especially difficult to maintain “where there is little precedent for American action, where American interests are more abstract than tangible, where the battle lines are uncertain, and where none of the contending parties wears a particularly friendly face.”¹³⁶ In terms of operations undertaken since 1975, they observed casualty sensitivity (USCA) had been reinforced by “sharp reactions”¹³⁷ following the suicide bombing of US Marines in Beirut and the deaths of US soldiers in

¹³¹ C.J. Park, ‘American Foreign Policy in Korea and Vietnam: Comparative Case Studies.’ *The Review of Politics*, 37, 1 (1975), 20-47: 47.

¹³² Balogh, ‘From metaphor to quagmire’, 30.

¹³³ C. D. Walton, Vietnam: Avoidable Tragedy or Prudent Endeavor? *Comparative Strategy*, 19 (2000), 355-360: 358.

¹³⁴ B.M. Blechman & T. Cofman Wittes, ‘Defining Moment: The Threat and Use of Force in American Foreign Policy.’ *Political Science Quarterly*, 114, 1 (1999), 1-30: 27.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-30: 27.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-30: 27.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-30: 27.

Mogadishu. Blechman & Cofman Wittes noted that US presidents were hesitant and reluctant to use the threat of military force; and though they understood the need to act they were “unable to lead the American people into the potential sacrifice necessary to secure the proper goal.”¹³⁸

Robert Mandel remarked on a well-established pattern, adding that “as uncertainty about mission objectives rises, tolerance for casualties falls, and this means that communicating convincingly the motives and goals for a foreign intervention or war is absolutely necessary in order to preserve choice and flexibility in military action.”¹³⁹ President Nixon stated: “When a president sends American troops off to war, a hidden timer starts to run. He has a finite period of time to win the war before the people grow weary of it.”¹⁴⁰ This surge in public opinion is referred to as the “rally-around-the-flag.”¹⁴¹ George F. Kennan commented that “the public remained indifferent until war began whereupon hysteria followed.”¹⁴² Arnold Isaacs commented on strong reactions to military action, noting that “the battle in Mogadishu, lasting only a matter of hours and involving no more than a few hundred combatants on all sides, ‘has in many respects had a bigger impact on military thinking than the entire 1991 Persian gulf war’- a startling thought.”¹⁴³

Analyses of 102 cases by Lian and Oneal however showed “no rally effect following a use of force. The mean change in the president's approval rating is 0%, both for the general public and within his party.”¹⁴⁴ They observed prudence in how the US public is able “to discriminate severe threats to American values from less serious events.”¹⁴⁵ Primarily, as Richard Holbrook observed; “without public support for a controversial policy it would fail.”¹⁴⁶ Garter and Segura reported war goals had “a great deal to do with the willingness of the society to pay the human costs of war. Conflicts perceived to have no clear criteria for the success are likely to produce a public very sensitive to casualties.”¹⁴⁷ Charles. K. Hyde noted that the public were able to “rationally discern the merits of each individual case and make an informed determination of support, based on expectations,

¹³⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹³⁹ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 192.

¹⁴⁰ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 30.

¹⁴¹ S. S. Garter & G. M. Segura, ‘War, Casualties, and Public Opinion’ *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 42, 3 (1998), 278-300: 297.

¹⁴² N. Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Picador. 2009), 132.

¹⁴³ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows the War*, 91.

¹⁴⁴ B. Lian & J. Oneal, ‘Presidents, the Use of Military Force, and Public Opinion.’ *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 37, 2, (1993), 277-300: 293-294.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 294.

¹⁴⁶ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 58.

¹⁴⁷ Garter & Segura, ‘War, Causalities, and Public Opinion’, 278-300: 298.

benefits, prospects, and costs.”¹⁴⁸ Tierney’s 2008 assessment also noted the US public is far more “willing to back a war, and tolerate casualties, when it thinks that the United States is winning; doubts about the likelihood of success are a major determinant of low public support; and the public tends to oppose the use of force if its objective is internal political change abroad.”¹⁴⁹

To summarise, US public opinion obtained prominence during the Vietnam War and remains as salient in US society, culture and ultimately its strategic culture. Public opinion has assisted as a theoretical platform to overtly display and sustain USCA from one generation to the next. It has consistently remained a significant consideration for elite citizens and is one of the US's centres of gravity. Though public opinion informs and restricts policy, it does not necessarily dictate it. In respect to patterns of behaviour; for US citizens war should only be considered as a last resort or as necessity to defend its people; and if a cause is deemed worthy of US military intervention the government must be willing to provide credible justification. Though, what constitutes a worthy cause? Public opinion will continue as a key consideration in the use of military force, especially for those who are elected to their positions. In the following chapters there are several historical examples to show the enduring link between USCA and public opinion.

Accountability, Review & Improvement

The democratic and legislative framework of the United States encourages accountability, review and improvement following the use of its armed forces in military operations; examples include congressional hearings and DOD’s departmental reviews. Though there are limitations within these processes, the intention is to provide an appraisal of the military operation conducted; to acknowledge outcomes and consequences; to provide recommendations for future military operations and to assess the US casualty figures.

For example, Following Operation Restore Hope (1992-1993) the DOD initiated an executive inter-agency policy review and President B. Clinton issued Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD-25) on May 3, 1994. Principally, this policy was “designed to impose discipline on both the UN and the US to make peace operations a more effective instrument of collective security.”¹⁵⁰ The PDD-25 reaffirmed that the “primary mission of the U.S. military forces was to be prepared and able to fight

¹⁴⁸ Hyde, ‘Casualty aversion’, 17-27: 20.

¹⁴⁹ Tierney, ‘America’s Quagmire Mentality’ 44-66: 48.

¹⁵⁰ *Clinton Administration Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations (PDD 25) Executive Summary*, US Department of State Publication Number 10161 Released by the Bureau of International Organization Affairs May 1994. <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd25.htm>, [Accessed: 19/03/2021].

and win two simultaneous regional conflicts,”¹⁵¹ and peace operations could not be the “centrepiece of U.S. foreign policy.”¹⁵²

PDD-25 addressed six major issues of reform and improvement. Which were:

1. Making disciplined and coherent choices about which peace operations to support.
2. Reducing US costs for UN peace operations.
3. Defining clearly our policy regarding the command and control of US military forces in UN peace operations.
4. Reforming and improving the UN's capability to manage peace operations.
5. Improving the way, the US government manages and funds peace operations.
6. Creating better forms of cooperation between the Executive, the Congress and the American public on peace operations.¹⁵³

Several points contained in the PDD-25 are influenced by USCA:

- The directive incorporated new “standards of review for US support for participation in peace operations, with the most stringent applying to US participation in missions that may involve combat.”¹⁵⁴
- Directed US support to strengthen UN management of peace operations and the UN's planning, logistics, information and command and control capabilities.
- The directive acknowledged “participation in UN peace operations can only succeed over the long term with the bipartisan support of Congress and the American people.”¹⁵⁵ To support this the directive supported an increase of information and consultation between the executive branch and Congress.
- The directive clarified that the DOD would take responsibility for the management and funding of UN operations that involved US combat units. The intention of this approach was to “ensure that military expertise is brought to bear on those operations that have a significant military component.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

- The President will never relinquish command of US forces. However, as Commander-in-Chief, the President has the authority to place US forces under the operational control of a foreign commander when doing so serves American security interests.¹⁵⁷
- The greater the anticipated US military role, the less likely it will be that the US will agree to have a UN commander exercise overall operational control over US forces. Any large-scale participation of US forces in a major peace enforcement operation that is likely to involve combat should ordinarily be conducted under US command and operational control or through competent regional organisations such as NATO or ad hoc coalitions.¹⁵⁸

Under section *ii. Participating in UN and Other Peace Operations*, the directive stated the following factors were also to be considered:

- Participation advances US interests and both the unique and general risks to US personnel have been weighed and are considered acceptable.
- Personnel, funds and other resources are available.
- US participation is necessary for an operation's success.
- The role of US forces is tied to clear objectives and an endpoint for US participation can be identified.
- Domestic and Congressional support exists or can be marshalled.
- Command and control arrangements are acceptable. Additionally, even more rigorous factors will be applied when there is the possibility of significant US participation in Chapter VII operations that are likely to involve combat.
- There exists a determination to commit sufficient forces to achieve clearly defined objectives.
- There exists a plan to achieve those objectives decisively.
- There exists a commitment to reassess and adjust, as necessary, the size, composition, and disposition of our forces to achieve our objectives.
- Any recommendation to the President will be based on the cumulative weight of the above factors, with no single factor necessarily being an absolute determinant.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

The PDD-25 did not prevent the US from engaging in peacekeeping, rather it advised the US and UN involvement to be “selective and more effective,”¹⁶⁰ as it recognised the benefits of “properly conceived and well-executed peace operations can be a useful element in serving America's interests.”¹⁶¹ PDD-25 provided a framework to enable informed decisions to be made on matters relating to peacekeeping and peace enforcement. As noted in the literature review, it has previously been suggested that the PDD-25 was a “direct descendant”¹⁶² of the Vietnam War; the Weinberger criteria and the Powell Doctrine (overt examples of USCA). Though Colin L. Powell retired before the PDD-25 was published, his influence and commitment at the DOD (as discussed later in Chapter Seven) is evident in the policies in the documents; for example, the requirement that before the Executive Branch committed US troops: “that the tough political goals had to be set first,”¹⁶³ and the endpoint which later became known as the ‘exit strategy’. The considerations and policies contained in PDD-25 are influenced by USCA and by documenting these recommendations for a younger generation of political and military elites maintains deeply embedded USCA in the United States' strategic culture. Further examples of how the review process has influenced policy and contributed to embedding USCA into the United States' strategic culture, are provided in later chapters.

Accountability, review and improvement are commendable, especially when seeking to implement better strategic policies, however, if the recommendations and findings are politicalised, simply ignored or forgotten, then they simply become worthless, which is unfortunately a characteristic of US society.

Sea power, Air power and Technology

There are a number of factors as to why the US favours sea power, air power and technological weaponry – as a nation's strategic capabilities are influenced by its physical location. The US, with the exception of the War of 1812 and September 11, 2001, has uniquely sustained geographical isolation from its adversaries and to maintain this status-quo it projects its military power away from its own shores. Additionally, US society continues to be a “pragmatic problem-solving culture,”¹⁶⁴ with a distinct fondness for machines and for many years has “sought to substitute technology for

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Campbell, ‘Once Burned, Twice Cautious’, 357-374: 367.

¹⁶³ C. L. Powell, *My American Journey*, 576.

¹⁶⁴ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 142.

human effort whenever they could.”¹⁶⁵ In addition, this thesis notes, the US has developed a military research and procurement process which is determined by its deeply embedded USCA.

US elite citizens are attracted by the technology and weapons, as it is their duty to protect the US and its citizens, especially when sending them to war. This is despite warnings from strategic planners like Colin S. Gray that confusing “technological superiority with strategy itself, often treating technology as a strategic panacea.”¹⁶⁶ The US has continued in its “conscious attempt to sacrifice machines rather than men”¹⁶⁷ which has led “policymakers into the imprudent political and strategic adventure.”¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, the charge that the US conducts warfare in the way it wishes to fight rather than the one it’s is required to i.e. the Vietnam War should not solely be accounted for by the United States’ overreliance and use of technology and weapons with the intention of seeking a quick and successful victory. The question required is ‘why?’. Why has the United States’ reliance on technology formed an important part of its strategic culture?

US air power superiority is the “most distinctive of America’s military strengths,”¹⁶⁹ and this thesis considers USCA to be the core justification for its development and cause of US over-reliance, because:

- Military action can be conducted with minimal risk to US troops.
- A reduction in risk to US troops appeals to those delivering military policy.

Since its inception, there has been significant investment in the capabilities and technology of air power as its advocates promised a “shortcut to victory.”¹⁷⁰ It is considered to be highly effective and a low-risk option for military intervention, avoiding the “mud and blood of a ground campaign and enables wars to be fought without getting your hands dirty.”¹⁷¹ Its capabilities can inflict vast amounts of damage with little risk to US military forces and does not require US troops on the ground (Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 1945). However, as demonstrated in later chapters, the US military and successive executive branches have sustained an “undue confidence in its panacea-like qualities”¹⁷² despite flaws in its capabilities. Over-reliance on air power and operating independently

¹⁶⁵ Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 89.

¹⁶⁶ Owens, *Colin Gray: The Strategist’s Strategist*.

¹⁶⁷ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 72.

¹⁶⁸ Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 211.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁷¹ Hudson & Stanier, *War and the Media*, 227.

¹⁷² Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 211.

to other branches of the armed forces hinders the completion of the operation achieving its intended political and strategic objectives, as demonstrated during Operation Allied Force (Kosovo, 1999).

A further example of how USCA has subtly influenced the United States' strategic culture is the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) which is considered to be a direct descendant of the Vietnam War. Donald H. Rumsfeld deemed risk-aversion to be inefficient, and as secretary of defence to President G. Ford, he championed the RMA and believed in "smaller, nimbler forces"¹⁷³ combined with "new information technologies with precision munitions as a means of gaining a comparative edge in regular war."¹⁷⁴ Potentially transforming the very nature of war from a "historic shift from the era of wars of industrial mass production, to the era of wars dominated by information-led forces."¹⁷⁵ The intent was for the United States armed forces to be "smaller, lighter, more mobile, and vastly more-deadly in the precision with which they can utilize firepower,"¹⁷⁶ and the quest for better weaponry and technology provided a "moral seductiveness"¹⁷⁷ for reducing casualties. Operation Desert Storm (1990/1) certainly benefited from RMA's technology and weaponry combined with overwhelming force doctrine; the operation consisted of 500,000 troops gathered from an international coalition under the command of Norman Schwarzkopf. US Generals made all the tactical decisions and decided on targets using "an impressive array of stealth and precision weaponry to eliminate Iraq's communications, command and control systems."¹⁷⁸ In total, sixty-three US military personnel were killed, this figure being considerably lower than the figure predicted (further details are provided in Chapter Seven).

In 2001, when Donald H. Rumsfeld returned to the DOD as secretary of defence, he "consciously set out to purge the military culture of its risk-aversion, its rigid preference for the application of overwhelming force, and its restrictive concept of political utility of force."¹⁷⁹ Rumsfeld advocated a new style of US warfare: Immaculate Destruction (ID):

- It was intended to provide "a quick victory with minimal casualties on both sides."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷³ L. Freedman, 'Rumsfeld's Legacy: The Iraq Syndrome?' *Washington Post*, Internet Edition. 9 January 2005. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A58318-2005Jan8> [Accessed 09/11/2017].

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Gray, *The Sheriff*, 11.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹⁷⁷ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 88.

¹⁷⁸ K.J. Hagan and I. J. Bickerton, *Unintended Consequences: The United States at War*, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd. 2007), 168.

¹⁷⁹ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 85.

¹⁸⁰ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 31.

- Providing assurances to those who advocated for war that it could be fought “without demanding any price from the average American citizen, promised to transcend the societal constraints that had traditionally circumscribed the American military force.”¹⁸¹
- Consisting of speed, manoeuvre, special forces and psychological operations.
- Promising better integration of communications, firepower and stealth technologies which will continue to benefit US forces.

Operation Iraqi Freedom recorded an unprecedented level of dependence on precision weaponry, with an “estimate that precision-guided bombs accounted for nearly 70 percent of all bombs.”¹⁸² Additionally, at a tactical level, force protection (USCA) was implemented by providing US forces with safe locations and substituting the troops with robotic warriors. The *New York Times* (2002) reported that the DOD “is moving ever closer to draining the human drama from the battlefield and replacing it with a ballet of machines.”¹⁸³ The core justification for these developments in technology were to “shield and aid the flesh-and-blood soldier.”¹⁸⁴ Gervasio Prado, then the president of SenTech stated: “We seem as a society, thank God, very averse to taking casualties... We'll continue putting as much effort as possible into keeping the humans in a safe location and do this dirty job remotely.”¹⁸⁵

M. Franklin Rose, member of the board for Army Science and Technology of the National Academy of Sciences advocated that: “Robotics can do three things for the future army: keep soldiers out of harm's way, do the laborious and boring tasks and keep going long after a soldier is exhausted. And they have no fear, at least in current embodiments.”¹⁸⁶ Though he was wrong, Donald H. Rumsfeld fundamentally believed that “technology had rendered the battlefield transparent, predictable, and even humane; as such, force could be wielded with immaculate precision in the interests of American policy.”¹⁸⁷ Lawrence Freedman observed that the US military displayed an “insistence on preparing for wars they would prefer to fight rather than those they might need to fight.”¹⁸⁸ Similarly

¹⁸¹ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 111.

¹⁸² Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 78.

¹⁸³ J. Dao & A.C. Revkin, ‘A Revolution in Warfare’ *New York Times*, Internet edition. 16 April 2002. <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/16/science/a-revolution-in-warfare.html> [Accessed 26/10/2018].

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 90.

¹⁸⁸ Freedman, ‘Rumsfeld’s Legacy: The Iraq Syndrome?’.

Colin S. Gray noted that the United States' military power is excellent when it is performing on its "own preferred terms, but [it] is inflexible and non-adaptive to unexpected circumstances."¹⁸⁹

Overreliance on technology and weaponry does not sustain low US casualty figures, as the very nature of the war does not always allow for this and as Chapter Seven demonstrates, neither the battlefields of Afghanistan nor of Iraq were rendered bloodless and as US troop fatalities rose, so did references to an emerging Iraq syndrome (USCA) in US society. Controversially, under the leadership of President B. Obama, the US military shifted its operational approach to using remotely piloted aircraft; having established "clear guidelines, oversight, and accountability."¹⁹⁰ The US executive branch justified the use of remotely piloted aircraft as an effective asset against terrorist organisations who were operating in remote areas; military operations could continue to be conducted without a significant deployment of US troops on the ground; a further example of decision-making being primarily motivated by USCA.

A further example of USCA's subtle and deeply embedded influence comes from Isabel V. Hull's observation that pre-existing "institutional predilections thus seem to determine which aspects of technology will be adopted and developed"¹⁹¹ the US President (the Commander in Chief) and the United States' "strategic [centres] of gravity"¹⁹² receives from the executive branch, and the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Reflected in the Joint Chief's advice is the ethos of the DOD; their military experiences and socialisation, along with reports from the Secretaries of the Military Departments. All military personnel involved within this process will receive training in the United States' military institutions, for example the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point. Its original training programme when founded in 1802 focussed on officers learning specific skills and principles of mathematics and engineering. Though today the USMA has a varied training programme, its founding principles are maintained (further details are provided in Chapter Six), and officers graduating USMA, in particular its early cohorts, influence the development of the United States' military and strategic planning. For a senior officer, the allure of technology and weaponry being used to preserve those under their command and peers in warfare is appealing and should not be overlooked when reviewing the strategic culture of the US

¹⁸⁹ Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 54.

¹⁹⁰ Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 183.

¹⁹¹ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 329.

¹⁹² Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 173.

In summary, sea power, air power and technology continue to form an important element of US strategic culture. Twentieth century US history demonstrated how its citizens considered the advancement of US military weaponry and technology as the panacea for the reduction of US fatalities on the battlefield, notably air power. The US military procurement process continues to be influenced by new capabilities and technologies which project US military power away from its shores and choices of these capabilities and technologies will continue to be influenced and justified by deeply rooted USCA in its strategic culture.

Cultural & Historical Awareness

An appreciation for other nations' cultures and histories is central to building an international framework for diplomacy and as Bernard Brodie and Colin S. Gray reminded their scholars: "good strategy presumes good anthropology and sociology."¹⁹³ Despite the US being the scholarly home to a collective of outstanding scholars and universities who have developed and significantly contributed to International Relations theory, this has unfortunately not transferred to an area of strength in the United States' strategic culture.

Collectively, US society continues to lack global awareness and interest in other cultures, which P.J. O'Rourke described as not being "globally conscious,"¹⁹⁴ and in 2007 Marilyn B. Young referenced Gloria Emerson's appraisal of US Americans as "always been a people who dropped the past and then could not remember where it had been put,"¹⁹⁵ and though these statements are sweeping and generic, they do reflect a collective trait.

Over the past twenty-five years when conducting peacekeeping missions and military operations, partners have commented on the realities of collaborative security or peacekeeping with the US, and although the US has undertaken collective training with NATO allies, military action is a very different beast. The United States' collective lack of historical and cultural understanding remains apparent. US troops lack significant knowledge about the countries, societies and communities they are being sent to protect and work alongside. Tamara Duffy's study found that this lack of awareness hindered the overall objectives of the US operation in Somalia, noting that cultural differences "may

¹⁹³ C.S. Gray, *War, Peace and Victory*, (New York: Simon and Schuster. 1990), 54.

¹⁹⁴ P.J. O'Rourke, *Peace Kills; America's Fun New Imperialism*, (New York: Picador. 2005), 4.

¹⁹⁵ Young, 'The Vietnam laugh track.', 43.

give rise to barriers to interaction, misunderstanding, prejudices, and unknowingly offensive behaviour that may reduce the chances for constructive activity.”¹⁹⁶

Furthermore, there was contention between allies at an operational level due to “national interpretations of mission mandates and application of rules of engagement (including the use of ‘protective force’), resulting from the contingents’ diverse strategic cultures and national military experiences, encroaching upon the effectiveness of the intervention.”¹⁹⁷ Duffy recommended that military practitioners recognised cultural interactions as an important dynamic of all operations and improved efforts towards collaborative partners: “Everyone involved in a peacekeeping operation – from those planning the mission, to the military and civilian peacekeepers deployed to carry it out, to the local population in whose surroundings it is carried out – is part of a cultural framework.”¹⁹⁸

Duffy’s recommendations were published in 2000 and unfortunately, they were overlooked by many military practitioners in the US. It took a further 10 years and two military invasions for the US military to understand that to win the peace, it is critical to understand the cultures and historical narratives of both the people you are collaborating with, and those who require pacifying. Both military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq required the United States to work collaboratively with its coalition allies. The United States has continued to view the US way as the best way and maintained operational control of all its troops. As highlighted in the following chapters, this enforcement of US force protection (USCA) led to operational strain and criticism from those working in collaboration.

Regarding the idea of understanding ‘others’, US elites have acknowledged that improvements can still be made. Furthermore, theorists have provided the practitioners with a substantial array of reports, papers and theoretical texts; many of which provide insight into understanding others in a wide array of contexts, and on strategy and statecraft. Elite individuals, such as George F. Kennan did have a talent for examining other nations and provided proficient insights. Kennan for example was keen to ask the “big and important questions about US foreign policy.”¹⁹⁹ Kennan understood the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, and was astute on matters relating to how democracies “interacted with the world around it.”²⁰⁰ Kennan made a powerful case for

¹⁹⁶ T. Duffy, ‘Cultural Issues in Contemporary Peacekeeping’, *International Peacekeeping*, 7, 1 (2000), 142-165: 147.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 142-165: 147.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 142-165: 143.

¹⁹⁹ J. Meashimer, Introduction, in G.F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 60th Anniversary Expanded Edition (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press. 2012), viii.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, viii.

pursuing a “foreign policy that privileges humility over hubris.”²⁰¹ Kennan purposefully urged fellow elites that the US “ought to withdraw gradually from the far-flung corners of the globe”²⁰² and “recognize that the American experience is not universal and that we could best help others by minding our own business.”²⁰³ Misunderstanding of ‘others’ has become a frequent critique of the US and its military culture; and has been commented on by both its adversaries and partners. Rather controversially, Kennan added: “We have nothing to teach the world.”²⁰⁴

Jack Snyder’s, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, RAND report-R2154-AF (1977), challenged US elites on their core assumptions about the Soviet Union and highlighted the vulnerabilities that game theory creates. This report presented the differences in the two nation’s strategic cultures and asserted the avoidance of mirror-image assumptions during an international crisis: “Individuals are socialized into distinctively Soviet modes of strategic thinking. As a result of this socialization process, a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural patterns.”²⁰⁵ This was a pertinent lesson for US practitioners, especially in the historical context of 1977. This report, as does this thesis, links the process of socialisation to the theory of strategic culture when Snyder noted “the term ‘culture’ is used to suggest that these beliefs tend to be perpetuated by the socialization of individuals into a distinctive mode of thinking.”²⁰⁶

Colin Powell remarked that the “wise Prussian Carl von Clausewitz was an awakening for me.”²⁰⁷ The greatest lesson he learned from Clausewitz was that “the soldier, for all his patriotism, valour, and skill, forms just one leg in a triad. Without all three legs engaged, the military, the government, and the people, the enterprise cannot stand.”²⁰⁸ Powell’s military training was supplemented with further studies at the National War College (NWC) in 1975, which gave him access to the theory of strategy, international relations, history and philosophy. Harlan Ullman (Navy Lieutenant Commander) who taught military strategy there, enabled Powell “to connect my worm’s-eye experiences to an overview of the interrelated history, culture and politics of warfare.”²⁰⁹

²⁰¹ Ibid., x.

²⁰² Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 246.

²⁰³ Ibid., 246.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 246.

²⁰⁵ Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*, v.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 38.

²⁰⁷ Powell, *My American Journey*, 207.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 208.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 207.

Speaking about his military service, John Kerry remarked: “So many assumptions, fundamental assumptions were incorrect in Vietnam, because we could only see it through one certain lens.”²¹⁰ The solution for John Kerry as Secretary of State was for the US to stop looking at “other countries and see them only through an US lens. We have to try and put ourselves wherever we are into the other person’s shoes, into the other person’s life, and see their country as they see their country, and we’ll do a lot better.”²¹¹

The following chapters and case studies detail how US elites have continued to hinder its military's effectiveness by implementing operational decisions driven by underlying USCA, whilst not considering the sociocultural and historical aspects of the country they operate in.

Conclusion

The theory of strategic culture is an asset in the study of international relations and strategic studies; though unfortunately forsaken in the methodological discourse between practitioners and scholars. However, strategic culture provides a unique opportunity to examine relevant security communities (adversaries and allies) and their distinctive styles within a theoretical framework. Furthermore, this theory encourages scholars and practitioners to examine geography; history; the nature of the political regime, including such elements as religion, ideology, creative culture, and political and military institutions; and economic and technological factors. Though this thesis does acknowledge there are theoretical concerns with the theory of strategic culture due to its strained methodology. It firmly asserts the view that context is important to understanding why a particular state acts or has acted in a particular way. Furthermore, the theory of strategic culture should not be forsaken, as the benefits of this theory outweigh concerns over its methodology.

This thesis’ understanding of strategic culture is aligned with that of Colin S. Gray, who states that culture shapes and influences the implementation of military strategy and engagement with other states. This is because each security community (society) has a culture and habitual preferences, which are informed by belief systems, assumptions and preferences for behaviour. Stepping away from convention, this thesis widens the scope to include all that is passed on and embedded through socialisation processes, which ultimately influence and shape strategic-planning and engagement with other states.

²¹⁰ Kerry, Remarks at the Vietnam War Summit. 01/05/2016.

²¹¹ Ibid.

This thesis has also merged elements of classical realist political theory, historical context with the theory of strategic culture; and as a consequence, a long-term review of US history has provided a historical timeline that shows the implementation of USCA and its traits earlier than those previously suggested by scholars: USCA is not a twentieth-century concept.

As scholarship already acknowledges that war is organised and conducted by humans; this thesis has extended its theoretical remit to include an examination of elite individuals, as all participants of war encounter a unique experience: the civilian, the combatant and the member of the politic; and all these experiences form a collective, which manifests into a state's history and culture. Reviewing the elite individual contributes to an understanding of the context, and this thesis demonstrates why this should form the theoretical assessment process to necessitate a better mutual understanding; productive dialogue between states and encourage proactive policies rather than those designed in a 'mirrored-image'.

The research process provided an opportunity to follow Colin S. Gray's advice that as scholars we should not forget what the plot is. In the context of the United States, generations of its presidents have never fully committed themselves to war. Conflicted in their thoughts of maintaining the status quo at home and protecting the nation-state without significant loss to its own population and whilst exerting its global influence. In addition, when it is necessary for military action, US elites have tended to stall in their decision-making process, refraining, regardless of advice, to operate using the Pentagon's requested number of troops, favouring a low capacity and small US footprint. Would there have been a better outcome if the President and elites had operated at full capacity from the outset? Unfortunately, this question can never be answered as these decisions remain in the past, however, the following chapters provide examples of historical junctures, when USCA was implemented, either overtly, or when it has simply gone un noticed.

This chapter has begun a process of theoretically anchoring USCA to US strategic culture. Traits and components associated with US strategic culture were identified and examined to see how they are influenced by casualty aversion and to understand the reciprocal links between its casualty aversion, society and influence of the elite citizen on state policy. It is the socialisation processes which forms the 'glue' and holds the subtle and deeply embedded USCA in their strategic culture. Though, it should be clearly understood that this thesis is not merely saying that US citizens tend to be casualty averse. Rather, USCA is deeply embedded into US elite society, culture and its strategic culture; its presence remained unnoticed in the decision-making processes until later in the twentieth century.

Moving forward, to achieve a complete understanding of another state and provide a comprehensive assessment of its decision-making process, this thesis asserts that it is equally important to review:

- How a state interacts, influences, organises and maintains its power (persistent patterns).
- The culture of the society.
- The elite individuals who govern.

Combining all three provides an overarching context to how and why.

Furthermore, this thesis notes:

- USCA is not the primary concern of the elite when formulating policy and military strategy and this is demonstrated in the case studies.
- The socialisation processes form the 'glue' that bonds USCA to US strategic culture.
- US society has been assessed through the theory of strategic culture and the international area was considered through a classical realist perspective.
- USCA was not a consequence of the Vietnam War and nor is it solely a twentieth-century concept.
- When this thesis states that USCA is an element of US strategic culture, this thesis author is not merely stating that US citizens tend to be casualty averse. Rather, USCA has been embedded into US society, culture and ultimately its strategic culture; this process has gone unnoticed or been misidentified.

Chapter 4: The Origins of US Casualty Aversion

“The care of human happiness, not the destruction of life, is the first and only object of good government.”²¹²

This chapter unravels the true origins of US Casualty Aversion (USCA). Contrary to widespread opinion, USCA is not a creation of twentieth-century thinking, instead, its origins date back to when the United States was formed. Although USCA is not cited within the founding documents as a principle, the founding principles and established cultural traits of the republic created the foundation for USCA to organically grow, and to be subsequently passed on to each generation of its citizens, discreetly within their socialisation process. This chapter also shows that each of the United States' political and military institutions reflect the United States' founding principles. Over time, this has also incorporated elite citizens' heritage, political beliefs, religion, and their cultural identity, which has at times shifted US thinking towards military intervention, and then back to caution. It is these very institutions, which are founded on documents and principles from 1776, that have always returned the United States back to its core principles. Furthermore, this chapter identifies the core and cultural elements of US elite society and how these traits, often discreet, form the US elite socialisation process, which has propagated the concept of USCA and assimilated it into US strategic culture.

Faith and Religion

Religion and faith are reflected throughout the United States' identity and culture. It is these reflections which are of assistance in explaining how USCA has been passed to each generation of US citizens. *A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom (1777)*, written by Thomas Jefferson, states:

*We the General Assembly of Virginia do enact that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship place. Or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.*²¹³

²¹² S. Schama, *The American Future: A History* (London: The Bodley Head. 2008), 361.

²¹³ Library of Congress, *A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, 1777* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 2003), 75.

It was intended to end “religious compulsion and persecution by the power of the law-and provided the impetus for the much-discussed separation of church and state found in the Constitution,”²¹⁴ and has since been declared as “one of the essential documents defining the new American civilization.”²¹⁵

The US socialisation process still adheres to the bill. This is highly evident in public education, which has remained separated from the church (there are privately funded religious schools), unlike in the United Kingdom. As this research also found to be true, the United States remains more religious than most Western democratic countries, and its Protestant core values still influence their strategic culture through elite citizens. This thesis agrees with Samuel P. Huntington’s assertion that “Americans are overwhelmingly committed to both God and country,”²¹⁶ and that there is a longevity of the settler culture which remains an influence and has endured as a core component of the United States' culture. This thesis does not enter into a broader discussion about the anomalies and myths of the early settlers.²¹⁷ However, it would be remiss not to acknowledge that there are inaccuracies in the popular version of events in the formation of the early settlements, and which have continued to form part of modern US culture, and remain a prominent part of the US calendar and traditions; for instance, Thanksgiving.

The important cultural imprint these traditions left are, however, the early settlers' extreme Protestant faith which was exacerbated by escaping wars and religious persecution within the borders of Europe. It is widely accepted that Protestant values and thinking dominated the very early foundations of the New World and the later colonies of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which formed the United States. Significantly, it is the Protestant ethos within the culture of the colonies which has endured throughout US history, and is of interest to this research. When Protestant values are referred to, albeit generically, Huntington summarised them as an:

Emphasis on the individual conscience and the responsibility of individuals to learn God’s truths directly from the Bible promoted American commitment to individualism, equality, and the rights to freedom of religion and opinion. Protestantism stressed the work ethic and the responsibility of the individual for his own success and failure in life. With its

²¹⁴ Ibid., 71.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 71.

²¹⁶ S.P. Huntington, *WHO ARE WE? America’s Great Debate* (London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd. 2004), 365.

²¹⁷ A. Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York & London: Penguin Group.2001), provides a comprehensive analysis.

congregational forms of church organization, Protestantism fostered opposition to hierarchy and the assumption that similar democratic forms should be employed in government. It also promoted moralistic efforts to reform society and to secure peace and justice at home and throughout the world.²¹⁸

It is these values that have remained embedded within US culture, notably the sanctity of life, which has contributed to reinforcing USCA. Robert Mandel referred to the government of the United States' tradition and believed that "respect for human life and consequent casualty consciousness are fundamental to what makes a nation civilized."²¹⁹ This is embedded into US society through the church – a powerful message for the collective. US citizens are genuinely proud of their chosen religion and it is not uncommon to see billboards with biblical phrases by the roadside; for example, in US cities like Wichita, KS. For those Americans who practise Christianity there are powerful messages within the bible that Americans aspire to, and that they attempt to adhere to. A definitive example from the King James Bible is simply: "Thou shalt not kill."²²⁰ Romans, Chapter 12, highlights the sentiment: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."²²¹ Also: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,"²²² and "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."²²³ There are other biblical readings which can be applied, however, those chosen above are pertinent to demonstrating the link between life, US society, and USCA.

Thus, it is fair to state, as Maddox did in 2008, that "America's Puritan roots have instilled in some of its leaders a conviction of their special mission to shape the world,"²²⁴ Through this research process, this observation was confirmed. There are, however, variations amongst citizens in their uptake of religion. In the US case, there has been a distinctive number of elite citizens who have embraced their faith and Christian values. They understand and recognise the importance of the state and church being two separate entities. In the research process, the selection of

²¹⁸ Ibid., 68.

²¹⁹ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 13.

²²⁰ Exodus 20:13, King James Bible. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Exodus-Chapter-20/> [Accessed 15/07/2018].

²²¹ Romans 12:21, King James Bible. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Romans-Chapter-12/> [Accessed 15/07/2018].

²²² Romans 12:18, King James Bible. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Romans-Chapter-12/> [Accessed 15/07/2018].

²²³ Romans 12:10, King James Bible. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Romans-Chapter-12/> [Accessed 15/07/2018].

²²⁴ Maddox, *In Defense of America*, 43.

autobiographies by elite US citizens all discussed their Christian faith. They highlighted how their faith had been passed down from their parents and was a prevalent part of their childhood and their primary socialisation; inevitably influencing their decision-making process.

Notably, however, some elite citizens were much more open about their religious beliefs than others were. For this reason, elite citizens' beliefs and values should not be overlooked when examining US strategic culture. They directly influence US statecraft, especially in relation to USCA. Christian faith places value on the sanctity of life, and when a loss of a life is required, it should be for a worthy cause and recognised by God. Below are highlighted examples of how former US elite citizens have been influenced by their faith in the decision-making process.

Christian faith became a contentious issue during John F. Kennedy's campaign to become the President of the United States. It had long been known within US society that the Kennedy family, who had originated from Ireland, were practising and proud Catholics. Kennedy highlighted in his acceptance speech for the democratic nomination: "My record of fourteen years supporting public education - supporting complete separation of church and state – and resisting pressure from any source on any issue should be clear by now to everyone."²²⁵ The United States had never had a Catholic President, and concerns were raised within its citizenship. These concerns centred around the Kennedy family's ability to remain impartial on matters of state, in regards to the teachings of the Catholic faith and the opinions of the Catholic Pope. The minister, Norman Vincent Peale, publicly declared his doubts as to "whether any Catholic President could carry out his duties without being influenced by the Vatican."²²⁶ During his campaign, J.F. Kennedy addressed these concerns through his impassioned speeches and statements, reminding the public that "Nobody asked my brother if he was a Catholic or Protestant before he climbed into an American bomber plane to fly his last mission."²²⁷ Kennedy emphasised that both he and his brother were permitted to serve in the military of the United States, yet there was concern when he was announced as a potential President: "No one suggested then that we might have a 'divided loyalty,' that we did 'not believe in liberty' or that we belonged to a disloyal group that threatened the 'freedoms for which our forefathers died.'²²⁸ In his address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, he stated:

²²⁵ J.F. Kennedy, Acceptance of the Democratic Party Nomination, 15 July 1960. *The Speeches of President John F. Kennedy* (Copyright: Filibust Publishing. 2015), 2.

²²⁶ M.W. Sandler (ed.), *The Letters of John F. Kennedy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2013), 43.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

²²⁸ J.F. Kennedy, Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association: 12 September 1960. *The Speeches of President John F. Kennedy* (Copyright: Filibust Publishing. 2015), 11.

I am Catholic, and no Catholic has ever been elected President... I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute – where no Catholic prelate would tell the President, should he be Catholic, how to act, and no President or minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote – where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference – and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him or the people who might elect him.²²⁹

J.F. Kennedy consistently stated that he believed in an America “where no religious body seeks to impose its will directly or indirectly upon the general populace or public acts of its officials.”²³⁰ He believed that the religious views of a President should remain a private matter and that decisions made by a President should be made in “accordance with what my conscience tells me to be the national interest, and without regard to outside religious pressures or dictates.”²³¹ The very fact these concerns were raised and debated within a US Presidential campaign demonstrates how important religious beliefs are to US citizens.

In regards to unintentional influences on statecraft. Both of the Bush Presidents placed US troop footprints on the ground in the African continent. President George H. W. Bush was the first US President to sanction a humanitarian operation in the African continent in Somalia in 1992: Operation Restore Hope. There is truth in the suggestion that the United States' humanitarian operation was launched as a response to national outcry, as images of the humanitarian crisis were aired on US news outlets, which “depicted widespread famine with little commentary on the internecine clan warfare that caused it.”²³² There were, however, cultural factors influencing the judgement; for example, President George H.W. Bush’s religious belief that democracies create a safer world. The success of the Gulf War in particular demonstrated that intervention could be conducted with relatively low US casualties, and when President George H. W. Bush left office, US citizens continued to rally around the flag for Operation Restore Hope. Whilst serving as President, George H.W. Bush raised funds for a small chapel to be built at Camp David. This is a further example of how dedicated the Bush family are to their Christian beliefs. Despite the controversy which surrounded President George W. Bush’s two terms in office, he advocated the exploration of new

²²⁹ Ibid., 9.

²³⁰ Ibid., 10.

²³¹ Ibid., 12.

²³² L.L. Miller & C. Moskos, ‘Humanitarians or Warriors? Race, Gender and Combat Status in Operation Restore Hope’, *Armed Forces & Society* (1995), 615-637: 617.

ways to resolve the African continent's crises. crisis. In 1999, during the planning processes for his election agenda, President George W. Bush, who has since been cited as “Bush the African,”²³³ believed:

The United States had a special responsibility to show compassion toward those who were less fortunate. Some have said that he was convinced of this by his ties to the evangelical Christian community, and to a certain extent this is true. Yet he also believed that Africans bore at least some responsibility both for their dire conditions and for finding a way out of them.²³⁴

In 2003, President George W. Bush called a meeting of senior advisors to discuss Liberia:

‘Why should I do something in Liberia?’ he asked. ‘Because Liberia is ours, Mr President.’ ...We talked about the history of the country that had been founded by freed American slaves. ‘Even the Liberian flag imitates the Stars and Stripes,’ Colin added. I told the President that my Aunt Theresa had taught at the University of Liberia all the way back in 1961. The ties of the African American community to the country ran deep.²³⁵

The US Defense Department showed reluctance: “When the Defense Department doesn’t want to do something, the options that the President receives make it seem as if he is about to launch World War III.”²³⁶ However, President Bush was undeterred and he sent two hundred US marines to Liberia to assist with the transition to becoming a democratic state. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first female head of state in the African continent.

In Sudan, the situation was even more bleak. When President George W. Bush raised concerns about the crisis in Sudan, as noted in the previous chapter, the Defense Department opposed US military intervention. Frustrated, and more so when the international community did not embrace any solution to this crisis, he “acceded to the reality of that circumstance,”²³⁷ and the United States maintained a course of diplomacy. President George W. Bush should be credited with trying to intervene, and his reasoning was based on his Christian values. The Bush family also believed strongly that “Africa would go nowhere if we did not address the scourge of AIDS.”²³⁸ As a family

²³³ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 225.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 225.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 231.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 232.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 584.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

they instilled in their children and the subsequent generations strong beliefs and values and a sense of duty, which were certainly based on their Christian faith. Barbara Bush had embraced children with AIDS to exemplify a compassionate and caring approach, in a time when AIDS victims were also plagued by stigma. During his presidency, George W. Bush established the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS (PEPFAR). Today, the Bush family remains advocates for improved world health, especially in AIDS treatment and prevention. Having worked on the African continent, Barbara Pierce Bush continues to actively work on these issues and has collaborated with others to establish the Global Health Corps. This organisation works in remote places on the African continent and in partnership with other organisations, one of which is the Clinton Foundation.

In a variety of books written by President J. Carter, the importance of his Christian beliefs and faith are discussed in relation to his socialisation and personal development. However, as the President of the United States he reaffirmed the necessity of church and state remaining two separate entities: "My traditional Baptist belief was that there should be strict separation between church and state. I ended the long-standing practise of inviting... prominent pastors to have service at the White House, and our family assumed the role of normal worshippers in a church of our choice."²³⁹ During his presidential election, it was reported that when asked if he was a born-again Christian, he answered 'Yes'. This was reported in the news cycle and President Carter has since sought to clarify his response: "Many politically moderate Christians, including me, consider ourselves to be evangelicals, but the term has become increasingly equated with religious right or the Moral Majority... It may be hard to believe now, but until my third year in office, I had never heard of the 'religious right.'"²⁴⁰

To summarise, in spite of the separation of state and church in the governance of the union, religion and faith, notably Christianity, remains an important component of US culture and society. Religion and faith are also featured as an important element and are reaffirmed throughout the US socialisation process, notwithstanding the appearance that the church is separated from education. The Americans who have assumed the role of President of the United States, have consistently referenced how their Christian faith provided support during challenging times and how Christian values shaped their moral outlook. However, each US elite who has served the people and the United States fundamentally understood the importance of maintaining its separation, and of

²³⁹ Carter, *A Full Life*, 132.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 183.

stating this to the US people. Each American life is important, and from this fundamental belief, USCA has been subtly ingrained into subsequent generations of Americans; 'In God we trust'.

Case Study: In the Hearts and Minds of the People

The founding of the United States is well documented and this thesis does not provide a new account, instead it has reviewed this critical moment in US history to place the decisions of elite citizens into a historical context. Prior to the War of Independence (1775-1783), British America during the seventeenth century had been predominantly composed of English tobacco colonies. With this life came considerable risks, such as disease and conflict with those of native origin. Schama noted: "Though 6,000 immigrants had come between 1607 and 1625, in the latter year a census found the population of Virginia to be just 1200."²⁴¹ By the eighteenth-century British America formed part of the British empire that was considered to be "overwhelmingly, an empire of soldiers and slaves."²⁴² As the empires of Europe grew and their tastes altered, there was not only an increased demand for tobacco, sugar and cotton but also increased European aggression and with this came a slow yet meaningful change in the mindset of British Americans.

Prior to the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) the European capitals largely controlled foreign policy and military practise in North America. However successive "spams of violence"²⁴³ which included, King William's War (1689-1697); Queen Anne's (1702-1713); Governor Dummer's (1722-1725); King George's wars (1744-1748) all required British Americans to defend their interests and borders; and out of necessity, they raised temporary volunteer forces with bounties and the threat of conscription. In 1754 to prevent the French from occupying Ohio a British US military expeditionary operation was assembled under the leadership of George Washington. This operation was notably unsuccessful with US citizen-soldiers being forced to flee, leaving their wounded and their dead. With these military events came a slow yet meaningful change in the mindset of British Americans; the British empire was neglecting the importance of their security concerns and not sufficiently protecting their interests and thus, as a direct consequence of inaction, British Americans were being killed.

²⁴¹ S. Schama, *A History of Britain*, 327.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 325.

²⁴³ F. Anderson, *A People's Army, Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill & London, University of North Caroline Press, 1984), 3.

By 1756 the British had acknowledged the full scale of the French threat in the Americas and the military failings of “merely the humblest participants in a single theatre of a world war.”²⁴⁴ The allocated number of British soldiers were not only inadequate for the task, they were also disrespectful towards US citizen soldiers. John Campbell, the fourth Earl of Loudoun was given command the same year. As a professional soldier Campbell had served as a Scots officer during the suppression of the Highland rebellion (1745) and firmly believed in “unquestioning obedience.”²⁴⁵ Campbell also insisted on exercising direct command of all troops. This included the ‘provincial’ forces formed by British Americans many of whom had already “contributed its share and more of blood and treasure Britain’s worldwide contest with France.”²⁴⁶

The composition of British Military forces in North America at the time of the French and Indian War (1754-60) which ran concurrently with the Seven Years’ War (1756-63) in Europe was complex. Firstly, there were the ‘metropolitan’ regiments; regular British army regiments recruited in Britain and deployed to meet the French threat. In this period some twenty-two ‘metropolitan’ regiments of infantry were deployed in North America.²⁴⁷ There were also regular regiments that were raised entirely in the colonies, most famously the 60th Royal US Regiment of Foot. In these cases, however, although some of the men were colonialists, most were British and there was a considerable number of foreign troops most notably Swiss and Germans and even French prisoners of war. There were also several Ranger units, originally recruited from colonial frontiersmen who had an intimate knowledge of the country but, with their expansion during the war, included newly arrived immigrants, particularly from Scotland and Ireland. Such units were typically small, better paid than locally raised regular regiments but, in the words of Brigadier James Wolfe, “the worst soldiers in the Universe.”²⁴⁸

Of greater importance to this study were the locally raised Militia and Provincial regiments. Each of the colonies had the right to call out able bodied men to serve in militia units. These men brought their own weapons, had little if any training and would unilaterally return home once the emergency for which they were called out had passed. There were hardly what could be referred to as professional.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 6.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 12.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 3.

²⁴⁷ P. Brown, *The Army of George II 17-27-1760: The Soldiers who Forged and Empire*, Warwick, Helion and Company, 2020, Appendix 3, 279-280.

²⁴⁸ Brown, *Army of George II*, 234.

George Washington held a very dim view of them:

Militia, you will find, sir, will never answer your expectations, no dependence is to be placed upon them...when they are ordered to certain posts for the security of stores, or the protection of the Inhabitants, will, on a sudden, resolve to leave them, and the united diligence of their officers cannot prevent them.²⁴⁹

Provincial regiments, which were raised by each colony and bore the colony's name, also had many problems; finance was a major issue as the Colonies that raised them had little cash. The numbers recruited to such regiments, and the enthusiasm of the troops, was heavily influenced by the geographical location of the respective colony; those further from the frontier struggled to meet their quota of men. But it was the attitude of the colonists themselves that was most notable. Recruits were men of property who regarded the regiment as a means to advancement. They were recruited for only one year and when that contract expired, or when the expedition for which they had been recruited was complete, they simply went home. Most importantly, they regarded themselves as being 'under contract' and, although nominally and legally in the employ of the King, they regarded their employer as their respective colony. Being 'under contract' they saw no disgrace in 'deserting', as the British saw it, if they perceived their contract had been breached. In 1757, at Fort William Henry, a provincial battalion marched home over short rations which they considered had breached their terms of employment.²⁵⁰

Discipline too, compared with British regular units was noticeably light.²⁵¹ Officers, contrary to the customs of the time, messed with their men around common campfires, and sought to explain why an action was required rather than demand it be done without thought. Furthermore, the harsh drill training of European armies of the time could not be instilled in such men; there was little time for it in any event. Despite the contempt of British officers for their fighting ability, in combat they were generally good, but their approach to fighting was unconventional for regular line infantry. The colonial recruit saw no sense in being sacrificed by standing in line, shoulder to shoulder, and delivering a volley as line infantry were trained to do. The words of one such soldier, Tom Faucet, demonstrated contempt for regular British infantry during the Battle of the Monongahela (1755).

²⁴⁹ Quoted in Brown, *Army of George II*, 226.

²⁵⁰ Brown, *Army of George II*, 227.

²⁵¹ D. Marston, *The French-Indian War 1754-60*, Osprey, Oxford, 2002, 20.

“We knowd better than to fight Injuns like you red backed ijits [because] we wouldn’t stand up rubbin shoulders like a passel o’ sheep and let the red skins make sieves out of us.”²⁵²

In conclusion, colonial troops in all forms regarded their military employment as a matter of contract and as contracts are a bargain between equals, they did not consider themselves subject to higher authority as a British soldier did. If their contract was breached, they considered it nullified and they went home. They would not allow themselves to be subjected to arbitrary discipline. Nor would they allow themselves to be sacrificed for no good reason; once the emergency was done, they went home. The colonial soldier valued his life and so did his officers and it should only be risked when circumstances demanded it.

On matters relating to the ‘professional’ soldier and a centralised military force, the colonial experience bequeathed an ideology of ‘suspicion’ upon the founders of the United States founders. It has been recounted that Campbell was loathed by the US citizen officers who considered themselves to be allies and fervently resisted direct control and not helped by him ranking the US officers far lower than their British officer counterparts. The US citizen soldiers were alienated by Campbell’s demands of a “the British whip-happy code of military discipline... being imposed on the colonial troops who had never seen it, much less endured it.”²⁵³ Furthermore, Campbell’s “haughty manner infuriated provisional politicians.”²⁵⁴ along with his exigency for taxes and troops. Following the Massachusetts House of Representatives 1758 vote to refuse any more troops, William Pitt the First Earl of Chatham showed a “willingness to seek accommodation with the colonies”²⁵⁵ Campbell was recalled, fiscal policies “won favour with the provincial governments”²⁵⁶ and the Massachusetts House of Representatives agreed to provide the British the required number of troops.”²⁵⁷

Importantly for this thesis, Fred Anderson’s book *A People’s Army* also examined the “realities of military life”²⁵⁸ from the perspective of a civilian soldier and sketched out the chronological struggle for the North American continent from the perspective of Massachusetts and addressed the “social context of the military service in New England.”²⁵⁹ Anderson provided a comprehensive assessment

²⁵² Quoted in Brown, *Army of George II*, 232.

²⁵³ S. Schama, *A History of Britain*, 356.

²⁵⁴ F. Anderson, *A People’s Army*, 12.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, ix.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, ix.

of the “composition of provincial armies”²⁶⁰ supported by both qualitative and quantitative data. He observed “[T]he way in which provincial armed forces were recircuited strongly influenced their performance on in the field, and that while the structure of the provincial armies was superficially similar to the model of the structure a professional army, their functioning depended on factors entirely un-comprehended in their formal organization.”²⁶¹

Anderson highlighted that the provincial soldiers understanding of military service and warfare was “virtually incomprehensible to their superiors, the British regular officers.”²⁶² Yet it was a deeply rooted in New England provincial culture in which the soldiers, enlisted men and officers alike, were raised.”²⁶³ Their experience of warfare was nothing like their civilian lives and this experience created “unique frame of reference for the men who shared it.”²⁶⁴ These men had not joined to serve the King, nor had they joined out of desperation, but to defend their own. Critically, they expected to be treated fairly as citizen soldiers who volunteered their lives as such, no as expendable assets. This period defined the citizen soldier which has become the template of for the modern United States soldier.

The Seven Years’ War (1754 -1763) “decisively terminate[d] the imperial presence of France in North America.”²⁶⁵ This paved the way for independence; their justification being, the war transformed the scale of and nature of the peoples of Massachusetts Bay politics and economy. Taxes were forced rise and the war initiated a huge increase in the amounts of public debt. Furthermore, at least a third of the of their men eligible for service were assigned to the provisional armies or military effort. Benjamin Franklin wrote to the British, outlining his vision for the future of British America. The first priority had to be the defence against the French. Franklin suggested that this defence was to be provided by both the British Army and the US citizen-soldiers:

If the British government were truly prescient it would understand that its own interests would be served not by subjecting America but by co-opting it; that it should make good the understanding that Americans were responsible for their own internal government; and money were needed for a common defence it ought to come from the consent from their own institutions. Economically, too, the interests of the mother and child be seen as

²⁶⁰ Ibid., ix.

²⁶¹ Ibid., ix.

²⁶² Ibid., ix.

²⁶³ Ibid., ix.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., ix.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 6.

competitive but complementary, so that the industries of America ought not to be penalized for narrow interests at home but should be regarded as a strength of a common empire.²⁶⁶

In-keeping with US strategic culture, the US Americans did not fully understand the British and their London thinking. As Schama observed:

Franklin's rational and benevolent vision of the British Empire paid its ideological inventors the complement of taking their rhetoric about liberty at face value. But he presupposed a breadth of understanding, an appreciation of the strengths of US culture and society that barely impinged on the conscience of the empire-builders at home. Their policies were designed not to respect distance but to abolish it, not to make room for diversity but to impose 'order' and uniformity.²⁶⁷

Through re-examining this period, an understanding surfaces as to why citizens of the United States will only serve under US military leadership and flag, and why this is so galvanised into US strategic culture. There was a further increase of tension in the relationship between the British Americans and London over the implementation of taxes, which "inaugurated the beginning of the end of British America."²⁶⁸ The Stamp Act of 1765, Benjamin Franklin reportedly stated, initiated "the total loss of the respect and affection the people of America bear to this country and of all the commerce that depends on that respect and affection."²⁶⁹ British Americans who visited London during this period, were also displeased to witness the excessive lifestyles of the very wealthy. In response to further increases in taxation, in the form of the Tea Act in May 1773, the Boston Tea Party enhanced the justification for independence. During September, 1774, Congress of the States was convened in Philadelphia, where it was agreed that the King would be given a year to resolve their grievances. If this was not done by December 1, 1775, there would be a cessation of all trade with Britain.

On November 15, 1777, *The Articles of Confederation* were sent to thirteen states for ratification. Founded upon the belief that it was "better to secure and perpetuate mutual friendship and intercourse among the people of different states in the union."²⁷⁰ Principally, this served as the United States' first constitution for its war-time confederation. These articles served as a reference for Congress on matters of business, territory and Native American relations, diplomacy and foreign

²⁶⁶ S. Schama, *A History of Britain*, 352.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 352.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 368.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁷⁰ Article VI, *Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union*, 2.

countries and the war. The document explicitly stated that the Congress of all the states would declare war and that no individual state should unless war was imminent or a necessity. Each state could oversee and maintain their own armies though during peacetime these armies were to be disbanded. There was a provision to cover consent being authorised by the Congress for matters of defence:

- “No state shall engage in any war without the consent of the United States in Congress assembled, unless such state be actually invaded by enemies, or shall have received certain advice of a resolution being formed by some nation of Indians to invade such state, and the danger is so imminent as not to admit of a delay, till the United States, in Congress assembled consulted.”²⁷¹
- “The United States in Congress assembled, shall have the sole and exclusive right and power of determining on peace and war, except in the cases mentioned in the sixth article.”²⁷²
- “The United States, in Congress assembled, shall never engage in a war, nor grant letters of marque and reprisal, in time of peace, nor enter into any treaties or alliances.”²⁷³

The United States Declaration of Independence “justified the creation of a new nation as a necessary means to secure safety and happiness.”²⁷⁴ It was this historical context that the declaration was conceived and on July 4, 1776, all thirteen states unanimously agreed upon its content. Although the declaration is not law, a re-examination of its content provides statements to support this thesis. The declaration stated: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit Happiness.”²⁷⁵ Note that the first right to be declared was life. They believed that it was their right to remove a government and institute for a new one for their safety:

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute

²⁷¹ Ibid., 2.

²⁷² Article IX *Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union*, 3.

²⁷³ Ibid., 4.

²⁷⁴ Crouch & Garrity, *You Run the Show*, 14-15.

²⁷⁵ *The Declaration of Independence*, 4.

new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.²⁷⁶

To reaffirm this the statement was added: “It is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their security – Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.”²⁷⁷ The phrase ‘new Guards for their security’ is relevant here. The Congress further enforced their frustrations regarding their protection:

He [The King] has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people. He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.²⁷⁸

The British conduct of “declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us,”²⁷⁹ caused the US to believe that the British had forced them to take up arms. This was due to the British not acknowledging the diplomatic requests of the Americans: “In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury,”²⁸⁰ and the escalation of conflict. This inevitably led to the United States defending their citizens and property. They substantiated their position: “He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people,”²⁸¹ and “He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny,”²⁸² and therefore; “A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.”²⁸³

The Declaration reinforced the principle of the union and its protection by concluding: “we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”²⁸⁴ Further to this, the

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 4.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 5.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 6.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 8.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 9.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 8.

²⁸² Ibid., 8-9.

²⁸³ Ibid., 9.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 11.

declaration also stated: “We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.”²⁸⁵ For the emerging independent union, these words and sentences, although simplistic in approach, became a significant guiding principle in conducting statecraft and aggression, and have remained embedded within the United States' strategic culture.

The Declaration was intended to be an explanation and justification to the British and to the world as to why they sought self-governance and independence. However, not only did it justify why the Americans took up arms against the British (justification of military action is a trait which remains to the present); it also formed the foundations for the development of USCA. The life of an US citizen is a core guiding principle, as is their right to security. Additionally, this document reflected the opinions and beliefs of elite US citizens including Thomas Jefferson its author. When independence finally came, those founders were more than aware of the great difficulties of the tasks which lay ahead for their fledgling republic.

It is apparent that throughout US strategic history, the character and attributes of the elite US citizen have had an important role in the way United States foreign policy is conducted, and the way war is undertaken. It is certainly the case that this was established early in US history; Perret wrote: “Washington’s character was crucial to the shape, and possibly the outcome of the war.”²⁸⁶ Despite not receiving a formal education, Washington’s skills and experiences of working in land and estate management translated well into a leadership role. During this time, he placed an importance on logistics and honour amongst those who served under his leadership. For George Washington: “A well-managed army did not live by looting.”²⁸⁷ The beginnings of another US military convention arose - a self-sufficient US military force. This remains in US strategic thinking, and today’s US forces are renowned for their logistics and establishing infrastructure, especially during operations which require substantial fortification for reasons of Force Protection. There are also fragments of evidence to suggest that, during the revolutionary period, elite US citizens displayed and implemented traits which are now associated with USCA.

The first US strategy was principally defensive, to protect US citizens. Battles were to be avoided unless deemed a necessity for protection, or if circumstances allowed for a potential success; they

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 10.

²⁸⁶ G. Perret, *A Country Made by War: From the Revolution to Vietnam-The story of America’s rise to Power* (New York: Random House. 1989), 17.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 44.

often chose to wait and react to the strategic decisions of the British military. The US defensive strategy at that time can be accounted for by the perceived superiority of the British army, both in logistical capabilities and in trained military manpower. Although mentioned in several historical accounts of George Washington's life, his experience of the Seven Years War has not been directly associated with USCA. Washington's battlefield experiences played a crucial role in how he allocated resources, having learnt to manage an army with very limited resources.

Contrary to Washington's inherited suspicion of standing armies and horrific experiences of war, he insisted, and later advocated to Congress, that whilst at war with the British it was essential for the security of the union to centralise resources and form an enlisted and trained army. The reality of warfare also confronted individual states having autonomy on decisions regarding their citizen soldiers, troop numbers and regiments, for example one year into the war; there was cession on a draft for troops was required to sustain their opposition to the British.

On 3 July 1775, Washington took command of the Continental Army. Concerned by his lack of experience on the battlefield in comparison to other US citizens, the union agreed upon Charles Lee being commissioned as Second Major General and Washington's Field Commander. This was the beginning of the US chain of command. It took time for Washington to feel "any real affection for the Continental Army, or trusted it to stand and fight."²⁸⁸ Though when he was forced to George Washington led US citizens into battle and ultimately intended to win those battles with as little cost to his men as possible. The US narrative continues to depict George Washington as an US citizen who had no personal or political ambition; the father of the United States, who was their first President from April 30, 1789, until March 4, 1797.

To conclude, it is significant that the United States was formed through necessity, to ensure the protection and survival of its citizens. During the revolutionary period, the first US strategy to be implemented was a defence and displayed traits associated with Casualty Aversion. These decisions were informed by an instinct to prevent further US citizens being killed; battles were to be avoided unless deemed a necessity for the purpose of protection or if circumstances allowed for a potential success. They chose to wait and react to the strategic decisions made by the British military. Over time, these mechanisms of protecting US citizens, for example avoidance of major clashes,

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 27.

demonstrates the first implementation of USCA, which has become ingrained in the US individual and entrenched in US strategic culture.

Chartering a Nation

When B. Maddox stated her opinion that to this day the “democratic principles, together with the individual rights and liberties set out in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, are America’s proudest possessions,”²⁸⁹ Maddox was certainly correct. Reviewing the founding historical documentation along with the founding fathers’ socialisation, influences and experiences, has provided an enhanced understanding of the value which they placed on US citizens’ right to life. This provides clarity in relation to their expectations and their decisions on foreign policy, diplomacy and the use of military force. Additionally, the discourse between these founders provides further understanding of why and how certain decisions regarding the republic were reached and why there are noticeable paradoxes within their thinking. This is especially noticeable in relation to the establishment of a full-time standing army and navy, and their destined purpose; it’s destined purpose still remains a point of contention today. As the primary function of a government is to defend its nation, the war context in which the United States was founded, presented the founders with the immediate issue of its defence. In the initial period of the United States, it would be required to prevent European monarchies invading, maintain their safety both externally and internally, and avoid becoming entangled in other nations’ military affairs. These objectives were stated very clearly in the Constitution of the United States of America, which, in principle, was created at the Philadelphia Convention in September 1787, with the purpose to replace the 1777 Articles of Confederation, and was ratified by the thirteen States on June 21, 1788. From the initial document below are highlighted extracts which help to show how USCA became embedded into US strategic culture.

The opening line states:

WE THE PEOPLE of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the general Welfare, secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this CONSTITUTION for the United States of America.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ Maddox, *In Defense of America*, 34.

²⁹⁰ *The Constitution of the United States of America*, 15.

The United States is formed for its people, by its people. The constitution explicitly provided mechanisms to protect the people and its union. Article I Section 8, states that Congress shall have the power to raise taxes and pay debts and to “provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States.”²⁹¹ Adding:

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water; To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years; To provide and maintain a Navy; To make the Rules for the Government and regulation of the land and naval Forces; To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress.²⁹²

Article I Section 10, reinforced the principle that Congress or independent states should not enter into treaties and alliances without out congressional consent and clearly expressed: “No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, lay any duty of Tonnage, keep Troops, or Ships of War in time of Peace, enter into any Agreement or Compact with another States, or with a foreign Power, engage in War, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent Danger as will not admit delay.”²⁹³ This affirmed the stance of defence rather than active engagement of the military.

Initially, this position could be interpreted as encouraging isolationism, yet it is also discreetly an implementation of USCA. If there are no alliances and treaties, no US citizens would be called to arms for other nations. When the military was required for use, Article II, Section 2 stated: “The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States... He shall have Power, by and with Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur.”²⁹⁴ In addition, Article IV, Section 4, provided the mutual reassurance to their security through collective defence: “Shall protect each of the against Invasion”²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ Article I, Section 8, *The Constitution of the United States of America*, 25.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 25-26.

²⁹³ Article I, Section 10, *The Constitution of the United States of America*, 29.

²⁹⁴ Article II, Section 2, *The Constitution of the United States of America*, 33.

²⁹⁵ Article IV, Section 4, *The Constitution of the United States of America*, 39.

The United States constitution was crafted by religious, philosophical and politically-enlightened minds, who aspired to create a perfect union. Realistic compromises were made by the draftees to enable the people of the union to live their lives safely in the pursuit of happiness, protected from the threat of invasion or civil discontent. They “separated the purse from the sword. With the deliberate intention of making it difficult for the US to engage in war; by establishing a deliberative check to hasty action, they attempted to ensure that the decision to wage war would be made by those most accountable to the people.”²⁹⁶ Caution and defence lay at the heart of the document, and the US-Citizen soldier’s service would only be for their own country. The stipulation of a process of checks and balances, created a culture of imposed self-restraint to protect the democracy of the nation, especially during wartime.

Though the US Constitution was dedicated to the promotion of liberty, human dignity and law; its predominately white Christian citizenship excluded citizenship for those bound by slavery and the decedents of Native American populations, who were considered to have “cast off their allegiance to the elected government of the United States.”²⁹⁷ Military action was conducted against Native American communities using the justification of defending and protecting the union. It was alleged that European nations were using the Native American peoples as military proxies, providing the elite citizens of US society an (albeit appalling) rationale to remove their communities from American soil. During the research process, the decision was reached not to include a review of the internal wars with the Native American populations, as this topic could form the basis of its own thesis. It is important to understand though, that the elite citizens of the American establishment naïvely believed that they were improving the lives of the native populations with their religious values. When their values were not embraced and conflict became more frequent between the two communities, there was a fundamental belief of the governing citizens that it was their right to protect their population against those not of American citizenship; and unfortunately for these Native American populations, they were not seen as American citizens until much later in American history. Until that later time, USCA did not directly apply to them.

Harold W. Rood stated: “The adoption of the U.S. constitution may have been an act of reflection and choice by those citizens of the Union.”²⁹⁸ This is certainly plausible in relation to the embedding of USCA within US Strategic Culture. The implementation of veiled military caution within the

²⁹⁶ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 26-27.

²⁹⁷ Schama, *The American Future*, 44.

²⁹⁸ Crouch & Garrity, *You Run the Show*, 18.

Constitution was reflected in the opinions and decisions of President George Washington, 1789-1797: "The first commander-in-chief was himself much conflicted about how a nation born in war should handle the matter in its future."²⁹⁹ His first-hand experiences of military action increased his reluctance to have a standing army.

Washington believed that a standing army would be a direct threat to the liberty of the people, and he did not wish to see US soldiers being used against their fellow people "unless they had cast off their allegiance to the elected government of the United States."³⁰⁰ Washington reiterated the need for caution, calling for the foreign policy of the United States to "stay aloof from Europe's wars, so that the temptation to create a large army would forever be avoided."³⁰¹ Yet the union required defending. This created a paradox in US thinking which remains to this day. Furthermore, there is a justification for autonomy, written into the Declaration of Independence, from the British and the Crown "He [the King] has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures. He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power."³⁰² Even before the foundations of the republic's values were cemented within its constitution, the founders expressed concerns with the idea of an US standing army. Despite Washington's endeavours during the Revolution to create an army comparable to the British and French, this was not achieved. As Perret wrote: "It never happened, for already, in small matters as in great, it was different."³⁰³ Circumstances surrounding the formation of the military were already presenting specific challenges and an 'American' way of war, which was distinctly different to the European militaries, was beginning to be formed. President George Washington warned in his farewell address to "steer clear of permanent alliances."³⁰⁴ There was a consensus of agreement amongst its founders on this matter.

As with Washington and John Adams, Thomas Jefferson was conflicted by the idea of insulating the United States from foreign conflicts. Unlike John Adams, who advocated that the system of monarchy was the root cause of war, and that due to being a republic, war could be avoided. Jefferson wished to avoid war unless it was in defence of the United States. Described as a silent member of the Congress, Jefferson serves as an interesting case of how an elite US citizen

²⁹⁹ Schama, *The American Future*, 42.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

³⁰² *The Declaration of Independence*, 7.

³⁰³ Perret, *A Country Made by War*, 28.

³⁰⁴ M. Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace* (New York: Basic Books. 2014), 39.

embedded their principles and beliefs into US culture and society. Aged thirty-three, Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence. In 1777 he authored the '*Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom*', and in 1785 he undertook the role of minister to France. He was the first Secretary of State in President Washington's Cabinet and was subsequently Vice-President to President Adams. Jefferson witnessed the French Revolution and its consequences early in his political life. He too invested in the philosophical principles of idealism, which viewed "war as the sport of tyrants."³⁰⁵ These idealist principles impacted his decision-making. Significantly, this included his continued opposition to having a standing army and navy, which lasted until he became the third President of the United States of America in 1801.

In contrast, Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury (1789-1795), chaired a committee to examine the establishment of a standing army, despite knowing it would receive widespread Congressional opposition. Liberty and peace had to be maintained and defended. Hamilton had "pious hope," because "the Machiavellianism of European powers was unlikely to abate."³⁰⁶ Even when Thomas Jefferson became President, his administration was determined to reduce the expenditure on war. Russell F. Weigley observed: "The new administration was suspicious of all standing military forces, and as a southern and western administration it was especially suspicious of the Navy."³⁰⁷ Jefferson conceded.

As President, the expectations of defending the people became unavoidable, and in Jefferson's second term in office, he worked tirelessly to prevent US citizens and merchants becoming embroiled in the Napoleonic wars, in which the United States remained neutral. Jefferson stipulated: "American statesmen ought to resort to the arbitration of arms only after every conceivable avenue of diplomacy had been exhausted. If it did become unavoidable, every effort had to be made to moderate its barbarism."³⁰⁸

Jefferson was an early advocate for wars remaining limited and short, in order for them not to "consume the liberties established by the Constitution."³⁰⁹ In addition, Jefferson pioneered the guidelines for avoiding civilian suffering and for fair and humane treatment of prisoners. These principles were embedded into US strategic culture and have been assimilated into international

³⁰⁵ Schama, *The American Future*, 52.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

³⁰⁷ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 45.

³⁰⁸ Schama, *The American Future*, 52-53.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

law. As a man of “many contradictions,”³¹⁰ and a “bundle of paradoxes,”³¹¹ Jefferson was a “longstanding advocate of vigorous military action against the Barbary pirates; Jefferson was at the same time an opponent of a large ocean-going navy required for such a task, preferring to rely on a fleet of small gunboats best suited for coastal defense.”³¹²

In 1812, when the United States was again at war with the British, Thomas Jefferson emphasised the importance of “maintaining ‘the meridian of the mid-Atlantic’ as the ‘line of demarcation between war and peace, on this side of which no act of hostility should be committed.’”³¹³ For Jefferson, US expansion provided a safeguard for US liberty: “He saw no contradiction between the creation of an empire and liberty. He believed an expanding liberal empire was actually the best safeguard of liberty,”³¹⁴ and expanding US borders provided greater security. Drawing attention to the importance of Cuba in protecting the United States’ interests: “Its possession by Great Britain would indeed be a calamity for the United States.”³¹⁵ Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Alfred Thayer Mahan stated that it was fundamental to the security of the United States that Cuba remained free from the block of “Sea Powers” or potential aggressors who had the capabilities for creating potential naval bases there; as it would change the balance of power and influence in northern America.

The journey to a full-time standing army and navy was fraught with debate between the founders of the USA. It should be acknowledged that those opposed to a full-time standing military were not pacifists. It would be more accurate to refer to Washington and Jefferson as idealists, although in Jefferson’s case, his ideals were never fulfilled. Their concerns stemmed from their experiences in war and an understanding of the European system. It was their caution in respect to defence and foreign policy that embedded the principle of caution into the foundation of US strategic culture, which developed into USCA. Hamilton was the voice of pragmatism and the realist amongst the founders. In time, the idealists had to concede to the creation of a full-time standing army and navy, to keep the citizens of the United States, and its union, secure.

Within the United States Constitution there was a built-in safeguard to prevent individuals from forming alliances, to prevent the United States from being drawn into the war of another nation,

³¹⁰ Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 12.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 12.

³¹³ Crouch & Garrity, *You Run the Show*, 53.

³¹⁴ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 18.

³¹⁵ Crouch & Garrity, *You Run the Show*, 53.

and from becoming a war-prone nation. In addition, documents were drawn up to assist commanders in the use of United States' armed forces in the field. For example, Francis Lieber prepared a document for President Lincoln, '*General Orders No 100: The Lieber Code*', 1863. Within this document there are 157 articles, with guidance for military partitioners on the various aspects of warfare. Article 5 states that "to save the country is paramount to all other considerations."³¹⁶ Emphasis is placed on defence rather than aggression. Within these orders, Article 14 states: "Military necessity, as understood by modern civilised nations; Consists in the necessity of those measures which are indispensable for securing the ends of war, and which are lawful according to modern law and usages of war."³¹⁷

The two sides of the debate, as articulated by Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, remain at the centre of the discussions which have dominated US strategic thinking and its military action. This division between the founders has echoed down the generations of US citizens, leaving the legacy of a continued internal debate about when the United States should use military intervention, and how it should be carried out. Both of these questions are underpinned by USCA. If no action is required, the implementation of USCA was successful. If action is required, the question is - how does the military maintain a low casualty count?

West Point's Legacy

Addressing officer cadets at the US Military Academy (USMA), West Point in 2014, President Obama offered his vision of the United States as its Commander in Chief:

The military that you have joined is and always will be the backbone of that leadership. But U.S. military action cannot be the only – or even primary – component of our leadership in every instance. Just because we have the best hammer does not mean that every problem is a nail.³¹⁸

President Obama, whilst rationalising his beliefs, was also reminding a new generation of West Point cadets that the United States had options, and military action would only be implemented if all else failed. Choosing to deliver a speech of such importance at West Point underlined his commitment

³¹⁶ General Orders No. 100: The Lieber Code, Instructions for the Government of the United States in the Field, prepared by Francis Lieber, promulgated by President Lincoln, 24 April, 1863. The Avalon Project, Yale Law School Library <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19thcentury/liber.asp> [Accessed 20/04/2009].

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ B.H. Obama, 'Remarks at the USMA Commencement Ceremony' May 28 2014.

to both US and the international community, and to the idea that the United States would pursue all avenues to peace and stability before using military force.

The President's words resonated with the very principles West Point was founded upon. The vision of USMA at West Point is: "To educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the United States Army."³¹⁹

In 1802, President Thomas Jefferson responded to increasing concerns over external threats to the United States by signing legislation to establish the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point. Though Jefferson originally opposed a full-time standing army, he was able to control and mould an army to his way of thinking, which included an intention "to deny the United States its Caesars (of whom, Jefferson suspected, Colonel Hamilton might aspire to be first and to ensure the permanent victory of liberalism over militarism)."³²⁰ Jefferson insisted that the cadets were to be educated in civilian vocations alongside their preparation to become military officers. Science, engineering and technology formed the core of the curriculum, although there was also an emphasis on providing an education for the modern world. Jefferson believed that by teaching these young officers such a curriculum, they would be less inclined to take up arms, unlike the courses which were traditionally taught at the military schools in Europe.

The Jefferson ethos for US soldiers was: "Sustaining life, repairing damaged social fabric and building anew, this was as much part of the military mission as lessons in killing."³²¹ Elements of this ethos have remained embedded in US military culture and thinking ever since. These values and traditions are instilled into each new cohort of cadets at West Point before embarking on their military career. In his autobiography, Colin S. Powell stated that "traditions and rituals remain essential to the military mystique"³²² because they "instil a sense of belonging and importance in the lives of young soldiers."³²³ Though Powell was not a graduate of West Point (completing his military training at Fort Benning), his comments resonate with the West Point traditions. West Point has the motto '*Duty, Honor, Country*', representing its ideals and traditions, and a national character.

³¹⁹ https://westpoint.edu/character_new [Accessed 26/04/2019].

³²⁰ Schama, *The American Future*, 41.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

³²² Powell, *My American Journey*, 57.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 57.

The West Point cadets have their own prayer, which reaffirms the institution's teachings:

Guard us against flippancy and irreverence in the sacred things of life... Grant us new ties of friendship... Kindle our hearts in fellowship... soften our hearts with sympathy for those who sorrow and suffer... Help us to maintain the honor of the Corps untarnished and unsullied and to show forth in our lives the ideals of West Point in doing our duty to Thee and to our Country.³²⁴

Though it was Jefferson's *Military Peace Establishment Act of 1802* which directed the establishment of the USMA at West Point, it was Alexander Hamilton who had consistently advocated for a peacetime standing army to defend the United States. Hamilton believed that until there was a trained and functioning professional peacetime army, the independence of the union would not be secure. Previously, Hamilton had called upon Congress not to allow the world to see "a nation incapacitated by its Constitution to prepare for defence before it was actually invaded."³²⁵ Jefferson's and Hamilton's differing views of the role of the military are still evident in the United States' military culture, and in society, during times of war.

Following a visit to West Point in 2007, Simon Schama commented: "It struck me then that West Point was perhaps the only military Academy in the world programmed to have such conflicted feelings about war."³²⁶ Schama's observation remains relevant today. West Point reflects a wider cultural conflict over war and the role of military forces. Generations of West Point cadets have emerged from their training with differing, often polarised visions of what the army should be. These conflicting perspectives echo the disparate views of Jefferson and Hamilton.

Douglas MacArthur was considered to be the "incarnation of Hamilton."³²⁷ As superintendent of West Point USMA between 1919-1922, MacArthur's legacy was in further entrenching the Hamilton culture into the USMA training programme. In contrast, Omar N. Bradley had been a 'pure' Jefferson during World War Two and as the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Staff, while overseeing the United States' military policies during the Korean War. An interesting example of a general "who ought to have been one kind turned out to be another,"³²⁸ was Dwight D. Eisenhower, who personified West Point and a Hamilton ethos during his command in World War Two. Though again,

³²⁴ The Cadet Prayer. USMA, West Point. <https://westpoint.edu/about/chaplain/cadet-prayer> [Accessed 26/04/2019].

³²⁵ Schama, *The American Future*, 46.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 42

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 110.

Schama highlighted that at the end of Eisenhower's presidency he "sounded *exactly* like Thomas Jefferson, warning against the threat posed to US democracy by the 'military-industrial complex.'"³²⁹ Schama concluded that it was the Hamilton mindset which "for better or worse, prevailed."³³⁰

The contrasting viewpoints of Jefferson and Hamilton formed the foundations of an 'American' way of war and provides an interesting context to why the US is drawn into periods of international caution or military intervention. Its defence policy cannot be easily categorised into these two schools of thought because over time new opinions emerge which influence military practitioners. It is also noteworthy that both Jefferson and Hamilton advocated for no American blood to be spilt unnecessarily in war. This principle has consistently remained and been implemented throughout US history in varying degrees, and supports this thesis' observation that USCA was formed much earlier in the popular US narrative than previously realised.

A further observation of the development of USCA is that for the United States, the War of 1812 was a war of necessity which concluded with mixed outcomes. Included in these outcomes were elevated national self-confidence and a growing urge for expansion; although for the Federalist Party, its apparent anti-war rhetoric saw its demise. In regards to the development of the United States' strategic culture, the important outcome was the development of the military review. This review tied together "the diverse strands of activity in maritime defense and the land coherent strategy for the military protection and advancement of American national interests."³³¹ There was a universal agreement amongst the elites that their military capabilities had lacked cohesion during the war and many felt their army officers were especially ill-prepared for warfare.

The training at West Point had not provided their army officers with sufficient training in strategic doctrine and what was required was a "solid military with an officer class skilled and trained in the art of strategy."³³² John C. Calhoun (Secretary of War, 1817-1825) submitted plans to Congress for an expanded army. Now the Army was to be maintained during peacetime under the command of a full-time staffed structure and when deemed necessary during war time it could be expanded. Calhoun expressed the desire to develop a corps of officers that were well-trained in the art of war: "War is an art, to attain perfection in which much time and experience, particularly for the officers,

³²⁹ Ibid., 110.

³³⁰ Ibid., 110.

³³¹ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 81.

³³² Ibid., 55.

are necessary.”³³³ Modifications of the education and training programme at West Point began in 1817, under the leadership of Sylvanus Thayer.

Thayer introduced the key foundation of professionalism and the officer class regarded “itself as the guardian of American democracy and republican values;”³³⁴ a principle which has remained until the present day. The main focus of teaching remained on civil engineering, although additionally, there was an elementary education in strategy and the tactics of war. These teachings in time developed into an US way of strategic thinking, with its core principle being defensiveness. The early US strategic thinkers, Dennis Hart Mahan and Henry Wager Halleck, did not support the strategy of annihilation and stated that if it is used, due to absolute necessity, it should only be used occasionally. Both were advocates of fortification and being well prepared from a defensive stance. Henry Wager Halleck, in 1846, reaffirmed that the United States’ role in world affairs was “primarily that of defending the resources of its continental homeland.”³³⁵ Halleck emphasised a non-aggressive role for the United States by calling for a “military policy of self-protection and self-preservation, with a consistently defensive strategy.”³³⁶ “In the event of requiring an offensive strategy, its application should be either a strategy of attrition or a political strategy, not a strategy of annihilation.”³³⁷ Mahan asserted the strategic principle of seeking “the greatest damage to the enemy with the least exposure to oneself,”³³⁸ and Halleck promoted an early approach of using soft power; rather than using an “invading force,”³³⁹ to seek a political diversion. Russell F. Weigley wrote in his 1973 review: “Consequently, the mainstream of American strategy in thought and in action was cautious.”³⁴⁰

To add, reduced exposure can be interpreted as Force Protection, which is an implementation of USCA. Political means have been utilised within US military operations to reduce the footprint of US troops on the ground, which can also be considered to be an implementation of USCA. Both of these military experts posited prior to the twentieth century that if military action is required, it should be carried out with the least amount of exposure to the US forces. The strategic thinking curriculum at West Point remains an important element in the socialisation process for West Point cadets; both

³³³ *Ibid.*, 54.

³³⁴ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 27.

³³⁵ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 85.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.

Dennis Hart Mahan and Henry Wager Halleck are taught alongside Carl von Clausewitz's, *On War*, though unlike the latter, Mahan and Halleck formed the original texts for US strategic thinking and contribute to maintaining US military caution and USCA within the officer class.

Furthermore, in today's society we have a clearer understanding of the visual horrors of war, which come with hindsight. Scholars are able to re-examine the decision processes, and sometimes subconsciously and unadvisedly, a scholar may make a judgement within their own historical context and framework, rather than of the one being presented. There may be factors in our societies that we assume to be straight-forward decisions. Yet, on the battlefield, the fog of war can make the easiest of decisions seem unmanageable. Furthermore, US military training remains repetitive and programmes have been devised to reduce the fog and ensure an instinctive automated decision or action. Bernard Brodie once observed this as an "entire emphasis on the 'instinctive judgement' that comes only with practices and experience,"³⁴¹ adding that "the commander who is capable of recognizing just as clearly the unique qualities of the situation covered in the textbooks will use such 'principles' at most as a reminder of the obvious."³⁴² Though as Brodie reminded scholars and military practitioners: "In short, the [catalogue] of principles must be recognised for what it is, which is a device intended to circumvent the need for months and years of study and rumination on very difficult subjects, presented mostly in the form of military and political history and the 'lessons' that may be justly derived there from."³⁴³

The legacy of West Point has endured both in US society and its strategic culture. Although not always obvious, each generation of military cadets has passed down an ethos of USCA. The competing principles of Jefferson and Hamilton have pushed military officers and advisors in the direction of either intervention or caution. The way an administration conducts itself in the international arena will in part be determined by the background of the elite citizen decision makers in the political world; the military institution they attended and whether they subscribe to the Jefferson or Hamilton school of thought. However, the constant is that when US officers undertake a position of leadership which requires them to step forward and lead their fellow citizens into military action, USCA is invoked.

The Civil War

³⁴¹ Brodie, *War & Politics*, 447.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 448.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 448.

It is historically well-documented that the Civil War (1861-1865) formed the United States as we know it today, and within certain scholarly circles it is recognised as being the first modern conflict. The following part of this chapter presents the findings from the research process which re-examined the scholarly literature and available sources on the Civil War. The intent was to better understand the Civil War's impact on US society and culture, and to also review the values and principles in the political and military institutions, including the elite citizens during this time. Additionally, the research was to identify the conduct of the military operations and highlight and demonstrate the implementation of casualty aversion within America statecraft and how it became embedded into US strategic culture before the beginning of the twentieth century.

Without exaggeration, it could be claimed that the Civil War destroyed a way of life and with this came a significant cost to US society and culture. The nation became ideologically divided. Advances in weapons and technology came with a huge death toll which was incurred on both sides; there was immense suffering within the civilian communities and significant damage to the country's infrastructure, with an estimated cost in excess of twenty billion dollars. The society that emerged was considerably changed and would not easily forget the struggle it had endured. It has been estimated that the total death toll reached 620,000. Studies have also drawn attention to how significant this loss was: "American deaths in the First World War, the Second World War, and Korea totalled 564,000, but still do not reach the Civil War total."³⁴⁴ The very nature of the conflict was brutal and as it was based on an ideological pretext: "Volunteers on both sides believed they were fighting for freedom. This added to the savagery of the war, the unwillingness of both sides to end it before victory had been achieved."³⁴⁵ To add to the upheaval following the end of the civil war within US society, on April 14, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. The Civil War cost both sides considerably, in blood and in treasure. However, the process of renewal did eventually re-forge and strengthen the union; allowing for the United States to solidify its culture, principles and values and project a shared identity to the world, and emerge with a shared history.

This research process provided examples of USCA being implemented during the Civil War. As mentioned throughout, these examples were more discreet than others and for this very reason, they have either remained unseen, have previously gone unnoticed, or been deemed irrelevant.

³⁴⁴ Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 171.

³⁴⁵ Hagan & Bickerton, *Unintended Consequences*, 67.

The first implementation of the USCA is well documented: President Abraham Lincoln did not wish to restore the union through force. As President of the union, his primary objective was to maintain the United States and the Confederate states of the South, but they were unwilling to resolve the situation through diplomacy. Lincoln had no other choice but to pursue military action and to mobilise the Union's troops to suppress the rebellion. He instructed that the war should be limited, that it should not be escalated unnecessarily, and promised there would be no unnecessary punishment and destruction. His proclamation on April 15, 1861, stated:

I deem it proper to say that the first purpose assigned to the forces hereby called forth will probably be to repossess the forts, places, and property which have been seized from the Union; and in any event, the utmost care will be observed, consistently with the objects aforesaid, to avoid any devastation, any destruction of, or interference with, property, or any disturbance of peaceful citizens in any part of the country.³⁴⁶

This statement reflects USCA's fundamental ethos of avoiding unnecessary suffering.

Weigley highlighted further examples of Lincoln implementing a policy of caution. Weigley believed that Lincoln tried to maintain control over the direction of the war. Lincoln hoped to "restrain that tendency, to keep control of the war and its purposes. Therefore, he announced from the beginning that while he was obliged to wage war, he would do so in as humane and conciliatory a manner as he could: "We are not enemies, but friends."³⁴⁷ Lincoln raised similar concerns throughout the war in a bid to reduce the destruction. He conceded that "the South could not be held forever with the bayonet,"³⁴⁸ and the longer the war went on, the less likely it was for the union to truly be restored, due to the bitterness and anger which had grown on both sides. Pressure was applied to Lincoln as the war continued; the "accumulating Northern frustrations would push Lincoln's government into harsher and more vindictive policies."³⁴⁹ However, Lincoln didn't want to defeat "the Southern armies only to have an embittered South shift into guerrilla warfare, which might perpetuate itself indefinitely."³⁵⁰ The reality of the war ultimately required Lincoln to change his mind set in order to maintain his presidency; his rhetoric thereafter became more nationalistic. In preserving the Union, to maintain his political base, the consequence was an escalation on the battlefields.

³⁴⁶ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 133.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 132.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

Despite both sides sharing the expectation that “the war would be short,”³⁵¹ it became lengthy and a consequence was that the theatre of war became an experiment for devising the art of war and successful strategies for the generals. It is widely accepted that US strategy resembled Napoleonic warfare in its early stages. However, by the conclusion, the experiences and lessons were formulated into a national military strategy which resembled a strategy of annihilation which included “the broadening of hostilities to include the destruction of the enemy’s morale and war-making capacity.”³⁵² This strategy did not sit comfortably in the minds of the political and military elite citizens, in both the Union and Confederacy. Due to both sides conducting military operations and learning how to conduct modern warfare at the same rate, the “process was at times offset by relatively high rate of attrition across all ranks - through combat losses, disease, or expiration of service terms.”³⁵³ It became a necessity to establish an end to the conflict in order to save US lives.

The Civil War provided an interesting dilemma for those conducting military strategy: the officers on both sides had been socialised and educated together in the art of war through the military system at West Point. There are examples in which peers and in some cases friends, unexpectedly found themselves on opposing sides. Therefore, there was the possibility for a stalemate of catastrophic proportions. Inevitably, on the ground, the armies from both sides experienced similar restraint.

Officers who had little experience in the battlefield made errors. For example, they “had little experience moving large bodies of troops and often misunderstood or overreacted to their orders or to the few intelligence reports they received.”³⁵⁴ In addition, during this period of conflict, “units were committed piecemeal into battle, rather than as part of a coordinated effort; battles were engaged with intent of pinning down and destroying the opponent, but they were seldom planned with the phases - approach, assault, and pursuit - necessary to realize such intentions.”³⁵⁵ For both sides “security and reconnaissance were inconsistent, which gave the element of surprise greater impact than it otherwise would have had,”³⁵⁶ and the “cooperation between artillery and infantry left much to be desired.”³⁵⁷ The main source of these inadequacies for both armies stemmed from the use of volunteers. Their basic training was rushed, and they lacked the “psychological stamina

³⁵¹ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 87.

³⁵² Hagan & Bickerton, *Unintended Consequences*, 82-83.

³⁵³ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 88.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

necessary to execute complex manoeuvres under fire.”³⁵⁸ As military engagements continued, so did the realisation that lives on both sides were being significantly lost and wasted. The influence of USCA manifested through an understanding: it was now necessary to win the war through battles which required the least amount of bloodshed. In relation to today's military losses, the number of lives lost in the Civil War appear horrific, because Western society, especially the United States, has become accustomed to lower numbers of military losses. However, within the Civil War, the generals attempted to keep unnecessary losses to a minimum.

General Robert E. Lee, Commander of the Confederate Army from 1862-1865, is infamously quoted as saying: “It is well war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it.”³⁵⁹ Lee was masterful in the art of war. He understood the importance of managing logistics and is considered by scholars as having excellent management abilities. Good military logistics ensures that there is a minimum loss of troops on the battlefield as well as unnecessary loss of life due to poor health and diet. Effectively, ensuring there are secure logistics in place and securing logistic accessibility saves troops’ lives, and is an implementation of USCA. Weigley praised Lee: “His famous victories rightly made him the southern commander most feared by his enemies.”³⁶⁰

Of all the Civil War generals, Major General George B. McClellan notably displayed a concern for his troops and implemented USCA. From the outset, McClellan “won the enduring affection of his soldiers not least because they believed he cared about their lives and would not waste them in reckless adventures.”³⁶¹ Weigley highlighted that when McClellan was “confronted with apparently formidable defences of Yorktown at the beginning of his Peninsular Campaign, he did not rush into assault but resorted to a siege, a method which later provoked ridicule but which ensured a low butcher’s bill.”³⁶² This was a clear implementation of force protection and casualty aversion. Additionally, when McClellan led the western Virginia campaign he had the “intention of gaining success by manoeuvring rather than fighting.”³⁶³ McClellan “believed firmly that to win the war it was necessary to accomplish the difficult balancing act of combining military victories, to convince the South that it must return to its old allegiance, with restraints upon destruction and an attitude of conciliation, to persuade the South that it ought to do so.”³⁶⁴ His “military strategy was consistent

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 88.

³⁵⁹ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 168.

³⁶⁰ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 126-127.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 134.

³⁶² Ibid., 134.

³⁶³ Ibid., 34.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 133.

with his view of the policy which ought to govern the conduct of the war. By conserving life as well as property, he sought to wage war with least possible destructiveness, to occasion the least possible bitterness on both sides."³⁶⁵ McClellan implemented a strategy which represented Lincoln's proclamation; implementing recognised exceptional force training and choosing the strategy which inflicted the least damage to his own forces. McClellan should be considered to be the outstanding General of the Civil War. As the events of the war became more aggressive and McClellan was forced to confront Lee in battle these positive traits within the general's character were at times ridiculed and "once Lincoln removed him from command, the experiment in a war of restrained rationality was dying."³⁶⁶ As a consequence, McClellan's legacy has remained overlooked rather than celebrated due to the reality of the task which lay ahead.

The realism in Grant's thinking followed the belief that the Civil War could not be won without a significant loss of life: "Ulysses S. Grant taught the United States a valuable lesson: 'that war is about death, pure and simple.'"³⁶⁷ Unfortunately, at this time, this was the nature of warfare. Yet, "Grant did not much like battle; he was never distracted by the panoply and drama of battle."³⁶⁸ Grant accused Scott of incurring unnecessary casualties. Described by Fuller as "the first of the modern totalitarian generals,"³⁶⁹ General Major William T. Sherman is infamously known as the general who introduced the approach of annihilation into US warfare. He coined the often-quoted phrase: "Hard hand of war."³⁷⁰ The strategy of annihilation "not only aimed to destroy Confederate armies, but also affected the destruction of transportation links, factories, agricultural crops and entire cities."³⁷¹ The brutal devastation inflicted on Georgia and South Carolina, which Sherman oversaw, "universalized the war, waged it on his enemy's people and not only on armed men, and made terrorism the lynchpin of his strategy."³⁷² US society at this time could justify that those living under the flag of the confederacy were no longer citizens of the Union and received the rights of the Constitution, as they had chosen to leave. Despite his military conduct, General Sherman did have his reservations about war. He apparently wrote: "I am tired and sick of war. Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 134.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 135.

³⁶⁷ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 200.

³⁶⁸ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 141.

³⁶⁹ Hagan & Bickerton, *Unintended Consequences*, 83.

³⁷⁰ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 85.

³⁷¹ Hagan & Bickerton, *Unintended Consequences*, 83.

³⁷² Ibid., 83.

wounded who cry aloud for blood, for vengeance, for desolation. War is hell.”³⁷³ The strategy of annihilation in his view was “the complete overthrow of the enemy, the destruction of his military power... the object of war.”³⁷⁴ This view has remained within US military culture and some scholars have suggested it became the ‘American way of war’. It does most certainly reflect the strategy of World War Two and the implementation of strategic bombing. Yet, it is not solely the main ‘American’ way of war, rather it has influenced those who have been socialised in the military institutions of the United States, and it has been adapted when deemed necessary.

At the end of the Civil War, the Union Navy emerged “with 626 warships, including 65 ironclads.”³⁷⁵ At this moment, the United States, if it had desired, could have challenged the Royal Navy for command of the seas. However, as Boot correctly described, in the period that followed the Civil War: “The pacifist mood that so often takes hold after a big war gripped the country again. The army was demobilized, the navy scrapped.”³⁷⁶ At its conclusion, Quartermaster General of the army, Montgomery C. Meigs suggested that “if any American wars had to be fought, then let them be fought over grave matters on which the destiny of the whole world turned. Let them be fought for decency’s sake, for the cause of humanity’s freedom, or let them not be fought at all. Once embarked on, though, such wars had to be prosecuted without pity towards those responsible for bringing the slaughters on.”³⁷⁷ This thinking has remained an element of US Strategic culture and has maintained the belief in the protection of its own citizens and those who serve in its military.

Remembrance

Military remembrance is firmly embedded within US society and its annual calendar; formed by “a national memory of war.”³⁷⁸ Following the conclusion of the Civil War, US society proceeded with a process of reconciliation and reflection. Elements of this healing process continue to resemble today's acts of remembrance for its fallen citizens in war. There are two national days of military remembrance: The first is Memorial Day (formally known as Decoration Day), which is observed on the last Monday in May. The day was inspired by “the spontaneous habit of military widows decorating graves with wreaths of white flowers. In 1868 the commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, General John Logan, decided to institutionalise a day of remembrance - for both the Union

³⁷³ General Major W. T. Sherman, <http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/biographies/william-t-sherman.html> [Accessed 27/08/2014].

³⁷⁴ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, xxi.

³⁷⁵ Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 56.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

³⁷⁷ Schama, *The American Future*, 93.

³⁷⁸ Piehler, *Remembering War*, xiv.

and Confederate dead.”³⁷⁹ For the veterans of the Civil War, few wished to remember its brutality and in the years which followed the reconciliation process focused on the commemoration of the fallen and also became an opportunity for veterans of both sides to share their experiences, acknowledging their courage and honour: “At reunions, particularly joint Blue and Gray ones, they dwelt at length on the comradeship among soldiers, even between former enemies.”³⁸⁰ The Civil War generation embedded a legacy of ‘never again’, especially in regard to warfare on home soil, because the immediate consequences of modern warfare had affected the whole of US society, with its citizens witnessing first-hand the devastation and sacrifice. Today the United States remembers all the men and women who have fallen whilst serving their country. Additionally, Veterans Day is observed on November 11 to coincide with Armistice Day and Remembrance Day in Europe, and it honours the service of all military veterans.

A variety of war memorials were constructed across USA to honour those who had been killed in military action, as a lasting legacy and a reminder of the costly sacrifice of blood. The most symbolic act of remembrance, post-Civil War, was the founding of Arlington National Cemetery. Arlington still remains America’s premier military cemetery and shrine with over 260,000 fallen US citizens buried there. With the consent of President Abraham Lincoln, in 1862, General Montgomery C. Meigs established the cemetery for Union Soldiers on the property of General Robert E. Lee: “In part, as an act of vengeance.”³⁸¹ The first military burial took place on the 13th May, 1864, for Private William H. Christman. By the end of the Civil War there were “16,000 bodies buried on the Lee estate.”³⁸² As a sign of respect to General Robert E. Lee and reconciliation within the union, “Congress provided monetary compensation to his family for turning their plantation in northern Virginia into Arlington National Cemetery. To underscore reconciliation, the Arlington mansion, along with its original furnishings and reproductions, was declared a national historic site in 1925 and turned into a museum illustrating Lee’s family life prior to the Civil War.”³⁸³ Schama suggested that returning fallen US soldiers and later their families to Arlington cemetery to lie in peace together was a “peculiarly American habit.”³⁸⁴ There is symbolism in this very act of gratitude and honour.

³⁷⁹ Schama, *The American Future*, 26.

³⁸⁰ Piehler, *Remembering War*, 72.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

³⁸² Schama, *The American Future*, 106.

³⁸³ Piehler, *Remembering War*, 71.

³⁸⁴ Schama, *The American Future*, 29.

National Cemetery has remained a significant visual and inspiring shrine of remembrance not just to the Civil War, but to all the military endeavours which followed. It is the continuity of remembrance which was noted by G.K. Piehler: "There are, nevertheless, important elements of continuity in how Americans remember war."³⁸⁵ Piehler observed: "Certain conflicts, for example, continue to strike a responsive chord in the national consciousness. More than any other conflict in US history, the Civil War arouses deep passions, and as long as racial divisions rend this society, it can be expected to remain a vivid conflict for most Americans."³⁸⁶ There certainly have been military conflicts which have strongly affected US society's perception of war, for example, as Piehler correctly noted: the Civil War, World War II and the Vietnam War. He added:

In remembering the nation's wars, the nation's elites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries not only wanted to confirm the validity of that struggle but also to encourage harmony and peace within American society. By commemorating the Civil War, they sought to heal the divisions caused. By remembering the Revolution and the [post-revolutionary] wars, they attempted to further a vision of nationhood that viewed sectional and other divisions in American society as transitory. But focusing on the military aspects of past struggles, and viewing war as central to the national identity, had a price.³⁸⁷

The first-hand experiences of elite US citizens during the Civil War were embedded into US culture and society, before the dawn of the twentieth century. Combatants and civilians lived in the same cities, side-by-side, during the Civil War and a combined legacy of imagery through a variety of visual art and literature recorded the horror of 'modern' warfare. Arlington National Cemetery remains a powerful reminder to all Americans that military engagements and war come with a cost to its citizens. Military remembrance also reaffirms within elite socialisation an aversion to US casualties. The degree to which USCA is imprinted into the US narrative and consciousness does vary throughout its history. This inconsistency is due to the context in which decisions were reached on how to embark on military action, if at all. The continuity which has remained alongside the way of remembrance is the 'never again' mentality, which is reinforced by a preference for seeking diplomatic solutions. However, if diplomacy is unsuccessful in achieving the intended outcome, then military action becomes the only option. In this scenario, US losses are to be kept to a minimum and

³⁸⁵ Piehler, *Remembering War*, 5.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 86.

if the perception is that casualties were higher than expected, then a review is carried out and recommendations are made.

Within the US's culture, symbolism is a mechanism which displays its values and principles. Over time, several historical symbols continue to influence national identity. To name a few: the bald eagle, the Statue of Liberty, and 'In God We Trust'. Since the conclusion of the Civil War, the symbolism of the Stars and Stripes has been given iconic status on the national flag. Even the national anthem is a salute to the Stars and Stripes. Throughout its history the national flag has brought pride and solidarity to the Republic. In the 1890's the National Army led a campaign for every school house in the United States to fly the flag, and by 1905 nineteen states had passed laws requiring this to happen. Each US citizen who attended these schools during their childhood began the socialisation process of learning about their republic; the importance of the constitution, the institutions, the national identity, and the national culture. The Stars and Stripes symbolised all US values and as Huntington noted it became "essentially a religious symbol, the equivalent of the cross for Christians. It was revered. It was central to all public and many private ceremonies. People were expected to stand in its presence, remove hats, and, when appropriate, salute it."³⁸⁸

The early twentieth century saw the development of a code of etiquette for their national flag and in 1916 President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed Flag Day a national holiday. Subsequently, many states passed laws prohibiting the desecration of the Stars and Stripes. In more recent times, following the September 11 attacks, US society projected its resilience by displaying the Stars and Stripes to its full glory. This thesis does not dispute or disregard the controversy which surrounds the Stars and Stripes. Yet, it is misguided to think that the Stars and Stripes is a symbol of nationalism and represents the United States as a warrior nation. Rather, the intention behind citizens displaying the national flag and pledging their allegiance and solemn oath of loyalty to the United States is multifaceted. It is to maintain the union; to create pride within the republic; to draw together the diversity of ethnicities, identities and religions of the melting pot, to reflect one identity, one set of values and one national culture.

The Stars and Stripes remains a powerful image in times of war. Those who have been killed in service to their country are repatriated in a casket draped in the Stars and Stripes. Included in a military burial ceremony, the Stars and Stripes are folded thirteen times. Pride is taken by the six guards of honour in the folding. When folded and tucked, its stars face upwards, with the

³⁸⁸ Huntington, *WHO ARE WE?* 127.

appearance of a tricorn hat, symbolising the soldiers of George Washington and sailors of Captain John Paul Jones. It is handed to their next of kin by one of the six in a kneeling position with the words: “On behalf of the President of the United States, the United States [Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force or Coast Guard], and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one's honorable and faithful service.” For the US citizen, this should be a moment of pride as the republic thanks them for their service.

Pax Americana

In the latter years of the nineteenth century, the United States uniquely faced no significant threat from other major powers, yet during this period it built a navy to match those with vast empires. It is well established that the publication of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan's *'The Influence of Sea Power upon History'*, published in 1890 influenced US strategic culture. It encouraged both the political and military elites to consider how they should operate the navy and it contributed ideas on how sea power could project economic power for the United States, as markets were beginning to stagnate. Prior to this time, the intended use for the navy was to protect the United States' shores, and to protect its shipping. Becoming a dominant naval sea power with a fleet to match those of warring empires was met with opposition from the military and political elites. Yet despite this, the advocates of Mahan, which included Theodore Roosevelt, were able to pacify US citizens into building a world-class navy.

'Pax Americana' is considered to be the period between 1898 and 1917 in the US narrative, which created an 'American hegemony' in the Caribbean and Central America. The policies and rationale which preceded these events were marked by expanding diplomatic and economic influence with a focus on trade and creating new markets focused in the Pacific and Caribbean. The emphasis on trade and diplomatic influence led to the United States pursuing unilateralist and expeditionary foreign policies and becoming implicated in the protection of its trade and citizens.

Max Boot's study observed: “Normally this practise is known as imperialism, even though Americans, belonging to a country born of a revolt against an empire, are sensitive about applying this term to their own conduct.”³⁸⁹ There is an established belief that “the American preference was to exercise power diplomatically and economically - sometimes in combination, as in 'dollar diplomacy' – but when all else failed there was always the military might of the United States, the

³⁸⁹ Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 66.

brass knuckles hidden beneath the velvet glove.”³⁹⁰ This thesis challenges the belief that behind dollar diplomacy there was a government and military willing to deploy US power through military force and that “dollar diplomacy represented the subordination of US policy to the interests of Wall Street bankers and American owned companies.”³⁹¹ Despite there being an element of truth, USCA also needs to be considered, as it was implemented during this period of expansionism.

President William McKinley’s short presidency (1897-1901) is correctly categorised in the US narrative as being a period of US expansionism. What the narrative has failed to appreciate is that President W. McKinley was the last of the US presidents to have fought in the Civil War, and his foreign policy objectives were influenced by his own military experience and USCA. Following the Spanish American War, which was described by Secretary of State John Hay as the “splendid little war,”³⁹² the United States acquired overseas territories from the old Spanish Empire. A significant outcome of the Spanish American war was the Philippine War, 1899-1902. US intervention in Cuba was justified by the elites, due to its strategic importance and proximity to the United States’ shoreline. However, in regards to the Philippines, the justification for US troops was not sufficient for President McKinley, who from the outset was reluctant to intervene with an US military presence. Internally, the Republican party requested its annexation as they had concerns regarding economic trade: “The race for the colonies was in full swing, and Americans feared that they would be locked out of the Asian market.”³⁹³

In-keeping with the Monroe Doctrine, if the United States did not annex the Philippines, then there was a likelihood it would have been done by another European power or even Japan. This was an unpalatable proposition for both the USA thus, as tensions rose, President McKinley reluctantly sent American troops and instructed that the situation be dealt with hastily. McKinley did not desire war and this rationale has been attributed to his experiences whilst serving as a Union Major during the Civil War. As Max Boot wrote, McKinley had “seen enough dying to last him a lifetime.”³⁹⁴ The Philippine War concluded with the USA gaining full control of the Philippines until 1946. The Philippines came at a significant cost, as the military planners had not fully comprehended how difficult the military intervention would be. In total, “126,468 American soldiers served there (though never more than 69,000 at one time) and fought in 2,811 engagements. By July 4, 1902, the

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 129.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 138.

³⁹² Ibid., 103.

³⁹³ Ibid., 105.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 106.

United States had lost 4,234 dead and suffered 2,818 wounded.”³⁹⁵ This was a savage war in which US soldiers adopted the position of ‘kill or be killed’. Max Boot noted that out of the 30 generals who had served in the Philippines, 26 had served in the campaigns against Native American Indians communities, and they drew upon their experiences fighting an opposition who they described as the “finest irregular warriors in the world.”³⁹⁶ Boot added that for those soldiers who had served in the Philippines: “This dirty war offered no heroic charges, no brilliant manoeuvres, no dazzling victories. Just the daily frustrations of battling an unseen foe in a dense, almost impassable jungle.”³⁹⁷

Simultaneously, between 1899-1901, the USA entered into its first military coalition to defend its interests in China. The Boxer Rebellion did not forge or foster positive experiences of collaborative security for the US. There was no centralised planning, which ultimately resulted in the deaths of US troops whilst conducting a poorly planned attack in Tientsin. The US’s experience of both the Philippines War and the Boxer Rebellion informed its elite society and military about the reality and brutality of overseas military operations. In contrast to these two military operations, projecting US diplomacy was deemed to be more acceptable and rewarding. Although, considered to be a “brazen and successful... an example of gunboat diplomacy as the world had ever seen.”³⁹⁸

On November 6, 1903, the United States government recognised the Republic of Panama. The first act of the new government was to sign a treaty, which turned the Canal Zone into US territory. On completion of the canal in 1914, the USA had an invaluable strategic advantage, allowing its naval fleet access to the Pacific coast from the Atlantic on the west. Protecting the canal zone, however, was difficult. President William Howard Taft, who took office in 1909, and his Secretary of State Philander C. Knox, both stressed the importance of economic influence, and a key part to this policy was that “American citizens and property abroad were entitled to the same protection that the police provided back home.”³⁹⁹ Fundamentally, “they saw this as protecting property rights, the cornerstone of civilisation.”⁴⁰⁰ When examined closer, these actions were primarily influenced by USCA, which was being applied pragmatically. Taft’s policies reaffirmed a commitment to US citizens abroad receiving the same protection and rights as those on US homeland.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 125.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 127.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 100.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 134.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 139.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 139.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson, 28th US President (1913-1921), was influenced by liberalism, morality and the governance of international law for international relations and warfare; and he was not an advocate of gunboat or dollar diplomacy. Boot noted that according to President Wilson's naval secretary, he was "at the beck and call of the American dollar."⁴⁰¹ Despite his intention to create a world which was safe for democracies to flourish, believing that "once these autocrats were destroyed, the people could create liberal democratic governments."⁴⁰² Despite the appearance of being a non-belligere president, Wilson advocated and resorted to using military force several times.

On July 29, 1915, troops were authorised to land at Port-au-Prince in Haiti. For the United States military, and the Wilson administration, this action was deemed justifiable because it was of strategic importance to maintain the defence of the USA and the Caribbean needed a US presence. Concerned about European powers seeking to place a naval base on Haiti, whilst Europe was at war, the USA responded by placing their own troops there. Robert Lansing, Secretary of State, later related President Wilson's reasoning: "The first was 'to terminate the appalling conditions of anarchy, savagery, and oppression which had been prevalent in Haiti for decades.' The second was 'to forestall any attempt by a foreign power to obtain a foothold on the territory of an American nation.'"⁴⁰³ Similarly, further US military operations were undertaken prior to World War One which are linked to securing the US homeland.

The United States military capability would have been seriously disadvantaged if the European powers had taken the Caribbean islands. President Wilson placed restrictions on those operating a military capacity for the United States. During the Mexico expedition, John. J. Pershing was restricted in his military actions because, as Wilson stated: "the country did not want war with [neighbouring] states."⁴⁰⁴

World War One (1917-1918)

World War One alerted the European nations to the horrors of modern conflict. However, this is often overlooked in the United States narrative, despite 116,516 Americans losing their lives on European soil between April 6, 1917, and November 11, 1918. Evan Andrew Huelfer's publication provided an insightful and in-depth examination of the US experience during World War One. In addition, he examined how World War One, influenced US planning and strategic thinking. Crucially,

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 60.

⁴⁰² Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 18.

⁴⁰³ Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 160.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 204.

Huelfer's findings support this thesis's analysis, that USCA did not originate from the US experience in the Vietnam War; instead, its roots can be traced to World War One. Huelfer demonstrated the hypothesis which viewed "the United States' recent aversion to combat casualties as a by-product of the nation's unpleasant involvement in Vietnam. However, the phenomenon can be distinctly traced back at least as early as the First World War."⁴⁰⁵

There are two distinct conclusions to be drawn from his work. First, that "although the 'casualty issue' did not play the dominant role in the military's decision-making process, it did permeate the strategic culture of the officer corps."⁴⁰⁶ This consequently led to a restructuring of US force and training. Secondly, it reminded its readers of US society's national outcry following World War One, due to its "exorbitant expenditure in lives."⁴⁰⁷ Many elite US citizens during the interwar period "exhibited a distinct aversion to combat casualties... a phenomenon visibly influencing the US Army officer corps."⁴⁰⁸ In US society, World War One "further exacerbated a national disdain for war and affected popular thinking as well as national policy."⁴⁰⁹ Additionally, whilst planning for future war, "among the many considerations driving military decision making, preserving the nation's 'sacred treasures'— its young men — was a high priority."⁴¹⁰

Unlike this thesis, Huelfer did not trace the subtle evidence of the traits and implementation of USCA to much earlier in US history. As demonstrated in this work, it is important to acknowledge that USCA was often discreetly or subconsciously implemented for a variety of reasons earlier than World War One. In addition, Huelfer's work did not examine decisions and actions taken by US elites or take into account their socialisation process in forming cultural traits and norms, and ultimately, how these elements have influenced US foreign policy, and been embedded into US strategic culture. Instead, the common narrative created a perception of a pendulum swinging between US intervention and isolation. This thesis also adds that the tragic circumstances which arose from World War One were for the first time felt more widely within society due to advancements in communications, distribution of printed press and the beginnings of cinematography. The resulting national outcry in US society was a natural reaction from a principled and democratic nation to the consequences of World War One. In retrospect, although there were shifts, there were no radical

⁴⁰⁵ Huelfer, *The "Casualty Issue"*, 1.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vii.

changes in society, and therefore foreign policy was not significantly altered. US society had already established its acts of remembrance for its fallen, based on an appreciation for their sacrifice and an understanding of how the lives of citizens were. Elite US society drew upon these principles to move forward; vowing to prevent high levels of sacrifice of its young men.

Prior to the United States' entry into World War One, casualty aversion was implemented by US political and military elites; however, its presence was discreet. When the declaration of war in Europe was announced in 1914, there was fierce debate in US society about whether or not the United States military should become involved in the conflict. These discussions were echoed years later by similar sentiments to US isolationism during the 1930s, up to December 1941, when the United States entered World War Two.

Primarily, these discussions centred on whether the cause was worth the sacrifice of US citizens. As events unfolded, the United States was drawn into the conflict in Europe, on April 6, 1917. From the outset of the US involvement, there was a clear message sent to all its allies, that if US soldiers were going to fight and potentially die in combat on European soil, it would only be under US command. As acknowledged earlier in this thesis, US elites have "a deeply rooted and understandable disinclination to fight other people's wars,"⁴¹¹ and have "held a strong aversion to having their young men killed in combat under a foreign command."⁴¹² These principles still remain an important element of US strategic culture, and derive from the period associated with early colonial history. These communities were formed in part from those who had fled Europe to avoid war, and these values were later reaffirmed by the Founding Fathers.

Though the decision to operate under US command was implemented to ensure the correct usage of its troops, a significant issue was overlooked. German intelligence reported that "the American is wholly inexperienced."⁴¹³ This observation was an accurate appraisal. US Expeditionary Force officers across the rank and age range had very little trench warfare experience and many had not even experienced military combat. As a consequence, as Huelfer noted, the US "did not know how to utilize the terrain effectively."⁴¹⁴ The warfare being conducted in Europe at that time did not resemble any operation ever fought by US military officers. They lacked experience in "coordinating

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 3.

⁴¹² Ibid., 4.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 14.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 14.

large formations and conducting reconnaissance and security missions,”⁴¹⁵ all of which was necessary to conduct warfare in that terrain.

For those who advocated that the Civil War had provided an insight into modern warfare, these senior military officers were too young to recall its horrors and it had been the previous generation of military officers, who understood the unavoidable consequences of war on the battlefield. A further constraint for the US was their trench survival skills. Trench warfare required the officers to share their new experiences and ‘best’ practice however once in the trenches in Europe there was limited opportunity to do so. Furthermore, once an experienced officer had lost his life, the likelihood was that his replacement had even less experience and more often no combat experience at all. This cycle continued until the armistice, and whilst the US senior officers remained positive in their unforgiving task, they did shoulder “the burden of responsibility for their men’s lives,” and felt that they “could justify the human expenditure if it culminated in victory.”⁴¹⁶ The war did culminate in victory, but peace came at a heavy price.

By November 11, 1918, “the AEF had advanced approximately 34 miles, occupied 580 square miles of territory, and suffered about 320,000 casualties (16 percent), of which over 50,000 were killed in action.”⁴¹⁷ US society, its military and political establishments had not foreseen such a drastic and rapid loss of life on the battlefields in Europe. In addition, the reality of engaging in military conflict required the US War Department to address the sensitive issue of where their fallen would be buried. Many of the families whose loved ones had died in the trenches of Europe, assumed that the United States government would repatriate their bodies. This precedent had been established following the Spanish-American War and continued hostilities in the Philippines. This did not happen. Instead, graves were provided for the fallen in Europe, unintentionally causing additional anguish for many families, most of whom “assumed that their son had died in France, his body eventually would be returned to them.”⁴¹⁸

Although it is less well-known, between 1918 and 1920, the United States undertook military operations in North Russia, as a response to Russia’s revolution and due to concerns over geopolitical security in the region. In his work, Boot highlighted that President T. W. Wilson had

⁴¹⁵ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 101.

⁴¹⁶ Huelfer, *The “Casualty Issue”*, 5.

⁴¹⁷ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 116.

⁴¹⁸ Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*, 94.

“mixed feelings about foreign revolutions.”⁴¹⁹ Wilson had also refrained from providing a decision on whether the United States should have become involved; one of his justifications for delaying his decision was: “He did not want to align the republic of Washington, Jefferson and Madison... with the despotic regime of the czars.”⁴²⁰ The US military was also opposed to military involvement in North Russia, citing an operation there would be “an unnecessary and unwinnable diversion from the Western Front.”⁴²¹ Eventually, President T.W. Wilson relented and agreed to a limited US military intervention. Boot summarised Wilson’s reasoning as being: “to restrain the Japanese in eastern Siberia; to placate the Allies; to combat Germany; to rally anti-Bolshevik Russians into action.”⁴²² This campaign, however, was littered with a lack of morale amongst the US troops. Many of the troops believed that their commanders did not wish to seek a victory in Russia: “An anonymous typed sheet circulated among the US troops claiming: “We have no heart for the fight.”⁴²³ The North Russia campaign cost the United States a loss of “244 men – 144 from battle, the rest from disease and accident.”⁴²⁴ Neither the US military intervention in World War One, nor the sending of its troops to Northern Russia made the world a safer place for democracies to flourish.

Re-examining the cultural impact of World War One on US society assists in understanding the context in which USCA was advocated and implemented during the US interwar period, 1918 to 1941. There is an established US narrative for this period, defined by economic hardship and US isolationism. This thesis does not dispute this, rather it adds to the narrative, in an attempt to explain why isolationism became a strong cultural and political movement across US society. The term ‘isolationism’ became the name for implementing the distinguishable traits and concerns linked to USCA. Culturally, the horrific nature of World War One remains immortalised in film, photography, literature and art. For those US military officers who survived the trenches of Europe, their lasting memories could not be eradicated: “The experience was an extremely sobering one that left them visibly shaken. They witnessed a tremendous amount of needless slaughter.”⁴²⁵ At the conclusion of the war, there was a feeling among many of the younger US officers that their senior officers were incompetent and the command structure had failed them and their men, by implementing

⁴¹⁹ Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 206.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴²⁵ Huelfer, *The “Casualty Issue”*, 1.

strategies and tactics that led to unnecessary US casualties. Unfortunately, during this time, the public became uncomfortable with the horrid descriptions and illustrations of the trenches and warfare.

Many veterans returned from war broken and dispirited, and withdrew from a society they felt had sent them off to fight and then abandoned them. Unable to express in words what they had endured, they internalised their feelings of revulsion and anger. They refrained from telling their stories not because they had 'guarded the treasured memory of an inexpressible ordeal,' but because they had been intentionally muted.⁴²⁶ This would not be the last time that US society would react in such a way towards its veterans.

For those who remained in the military, the new generation of military officers overtly implemented USCA. The outcome was that the measure of military success would be judged on how low the US casualty rate was. There is evidence that during the 1920s and in the shadow of World War One, US society responded with a period of disillusionment. The public were able to read accounts by those who published their experiences through literature, poetry and art. At the heart of all of this work was the message of the reckless waste of young men in uniform. As US society galvanised with a 'never again' mentality, in contrast, President T. W. Wilson believed there was a potential to create a new world order: "From the ashes of old Europe, the United States could rebuild the international community on American principles."⁴²⁷ As global power began to shift away from the European powers, for the first time in its history the United States was looked upon "to police the globe."⁴²⁸ The United States had "the power, but not the desire."⁴²⁹

However, between 1926 and 1933, the United States militarily intervened in Nicaragua, with limited success. 136 US Marines lost their lives. 47 marines were killed in action while others died due to disease, accident, suicide and homicide, and another 66 were wounded. The United States continued to protect its treaty rights in China and the State Department stated in 1937 that this included "protecting American nationals, secondarily, American property. This would not have been necessary if China had had an effective national government capable of enforcing law and order, but it did not."⁴³⁰ On December 12, 1937, the Empire of Japan sank the USS Panay, in Chinese waters.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁴²⁷ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 18.

⁴²⁸ Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 231.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 231.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 276.

Despite this act, the mission in China was sustained with a low US troop footprint and with few military incidents. It has been pointed out in China that “the American’s bluff worked almost until the end.”⁴³¹

Political elites and the US military established a policy of conducting inquiries after military interventions. Following World War One, these inquiries found that:

Waste, unpreparedness, and incompetence led to high losses and shed light upon new ways to reduce some of those causes in future engagements. Serious discussions about eliminating those factors permeated professional discourse, post-war historical studies, reorganization boards, and doctrinal reform all identified the need to correct the shortcomings that had contributed to the long casualty lists.⁴³²

The US military officers who remained tried “to investigate, explore, and address many of the deficiencies that had caused such high casualty rates in order to prevent such reoccurrence in future conflicts.”⁴³³ Huelfer noted that “of the thirty-four officers who held command positions at the corps level during World War II, twenty-three saw combat in the First World War as junior officers in the AEF. Their World War One experiences had a seminal influence in shaping their views on combat.”⁴³⁴ Noted examples are George Patton, George Marshall, Joseph Stilwell and Mark Clark. It was determined that these mistakes should not be allowed to happen again.

During the interwar period, the military forces of the United States were constrained by policies which prescribed low budgets as a way to minimise the risk of becoming embroiled in further military conflicts. The desire within American society to reduce American military casualties was the catalyst for the intended transformation of the American military, “which affected tactics, organization, leadership, training, and weaponry. The Army’s leadership invested considerable effort addressing the tactical deficiencies it had discovered in combat.”⁴³⁵ Yet, the post-war report by Secretary Baker, which addressed the American casualty issue in its own section due to the significance of the casualties, concluded: “Our losses were astonishingly light.”⁴³⁶ Baker justified this statement by comparing the total losses of other nations and previous losses. He also pointed out

⁴³¹ Ibid., 278.

⁴³² Huelfer, *The “Casualty Issue”*, 49.

⁴³³ Ibid., xi.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 132-133.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 67.

that “the Union had suffered 110,000 battle fatalities in the Civil War.”⁴³⁷ These figures did not in any way form part of a suitable statistical comparison. In contrast, General MacArthur, wrote in his report: “Of all the coats of war, none is so irreparable and so devastating as that measured in the blood of its youth.”⁴³⁸ Significantly, these reports were in agreement that the United States military was not prepared for military engagement in World War One. This lack of preparation had led to unnecessary US casualties. Additionally, the reports from the few military officers who had warned in 1917 that the American army was not prepared for such warfare, were overlooked by the political and military elites.

World War One fuelled the American love affair with technology, as addressed in Chapter Five. A military report conducted by Major General J. F. C. Fuller “revealed that casualty rates had been drastically lower in World War I battles where armored forces had been used. He argued that mechanization would change the entire scope of warfare due to the cost, speed and flexibility of armored forces.”⁴³⁹ Amongst the military elites, there was a logic and justification for the use of advanced weapons, as it would reduce the numbers of casualties sustained on the battlefield. However, economic hardship prevented a number of projects moving forward. In 1931, Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur told a Washington radio audience: “Wars are largely won through new ideas and inventions. The great captains of history have all been innovators. The military tabulations of the world’s battlefields read like an index of new weapons, new equipment, new conceptions which have in result swayed the destinies of mankind.”⁴⁴⁰ There was agreement across society that US lives could never again be wasted; USCA was on display, and rightly so.

The decision was taken to standardise the curriculum in the military schools: “At every level within the interwar military education system, leaders addressed the ‘casualty issue’ and actively sought solutions to wage warfare at a lower human cost.”⁴⁴¹ The curriculum for officer training was to now focus on an attempt to “eliminate or drastically reduce the incompetence, mismanagement, and miscommunication that contributed to higher combat casualties. In effect, the increasingly methodical schooling process aimed at minimizing casualties in a future clash of arms.”⁴⁴² On June 12, 1919, Brigadier General Douglas MacArthur became superintendent at West Point. His task was

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 67.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 132-133.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 116-117.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 82.

⁴⁴² Ibid., 81.

to re-energize the military Academy, which would need to replace over “9,100 officers who had been killed or wounded in the Great War.”⁴⁴³ MacArthur “pleaded with wary doubters not to ignore the recent past. Failure to reform now at West Point would ultimately “be paid for in the bitterness of American Blood.”⁴⁴⁴ West Point’s curriculum was transformed to provide what was considered at the time to be a modern education; with a shift from a curriculum based on mathematics and engineering, to a focus on developing professional leaders. New Cadets would be educated in the lessons of past US military experiences, sacrifices and mistakes; especially those from World War One. Unknowingly, such training and curriculum facilitated an enhanced continuation of embedding USCA into US strategic culture through the United States’ socialisation process, and notably within its military.

As part of the military’s renewal process, US operational doctrine was also revised. Air power was established within US operational doctrine and US strategic culture. Political and military elites advocated for research and expenditure, as they believed it would be “humane because the outcome would be decided quicker and shed less blood over the long run.”⁴⁴⁵ This reasoning was reaffirmed by the belief that the US civilian populations living on the mainland would be safe from precision bombing. On July 02, 1926, the Army Air Corps was formed. This was the aviation section of the Army and would be the precursor to the United States Air Force (1947). During the 1930s, US military planners closely observed the conflicts in Spain, China, and Ethiopia. However, as Huelfer noted, none of these conflicts offered:

A true test for modern air power theories; the wars merely served as proving grounds for close air support weapons and techniques. Combat reports from the three theatres seemed to confirm that only forces armed with modern equipment could win the clashes of the future.”⁴⁴⁶

Yet, the advocates of airpower and the airmen continued to promote the airplane bomber as a “humane instrument of war that promised quick victory, minimized prolonged deprivation, and placed minimal burdens on the American people.”⁴⁴⁷ Conrad Crane wrote that “most commanders’ ‘primary objective was to win the war in the shortest times with the fewest possible American

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 87.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 117.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 122.

casualties.’ Many elites became enamoured with the ‘mystique of airpower’ because it ‘promised the best opportunity to increase firepower while reducing reliance in manpower.’”⁴⁴⁸ An attractive alternative to a society with a deeply embedded USCA and shocked by World War One’s bloodletting and unwilling to send another huge army abroad.”⁴⁴⁹ Behind all US military considerations for technological and strategic modifications, the desire to reduce US casualties was consistently demonstrated. The US Army:

Reinforced by a solid training program, contributed to minimizing unnecessary casualties if the force should be called to fight. But despite the large body of tactical thought and discussion circulating throughout military circles in the mid-1930s regarding new technological developments, the Army still struggled to incorporate the disparate concepts into recognizable tactical doctrine.⁴⁵⁰

Despite a call for change, in 1936 the US operational theory revised the first law of strategy to: “Be stronger at the decisive point.”⁴⁵¹

Many Americans at the conclusion of World War One were “uncertain over what the war had accomplished.”⁴⁵² A ‘never again’ rhetoric was sustained with phrases such as: “*wars to end all wars.*”⁴⁵³ Elements of US society were on a “crusade to outlaw war.”⁴⁵⁴ Following the Versailles agreement and treaty, June 28, 1919, there was a global shift by policy-makers to seek enduring peace. The League of Nations was formed to promote international cooperation; empires were dismantled; reparations imposed; and disarmament treaties were drawn up and agreed upon and modified when required.

Domestically, US elites worked hard to reassure the US public that they would work towards a lasting peace. Robert McNamara recalled in his autobiography comments made by President J.F. Kennedy about this period of US history. Kennedy had said that “our nation believed it had no need for the military and looked on men in uniform with indifference if not outright contempt.”⁴⁵⁵ President Wilson “called the country to embrace the League of Nations in order to guarantee a

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 125.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 122.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 32-133.

⁴⁵¹ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 123.

⁴⁵² Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*, 93.

⁴⁵³ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 17.

⁴⁵⁴ Huelfer, *The “Casualty Issue”*, 47.

⁴⁵⁵ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 54.

lasting peace.”⁴⁵⁶ To the dismay of the President, the US Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and join the League of Nations. US elites refrained from being drawn into alliances, as they saw them as a potential reason for becoming engaged in future conflict. Instead, the United States focussed its efforts on disarmament conferences and international treaties: the Washington Conference in 1922, the Locarno Treaty in 1925, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which “outlawed war as an instrument of national policy.”⁴⁵⁷

As events unfolded in Europe with the rise of fascism and militarisation, a resistance festered within US society. The isolationist movement gained significant momentum, as many citizens simply did not think it was in the interest of the United States to become involved militarily: “Pacifists and isolationists advocating disarmament condemned the military loudly and publicly.”⁴⁵⁸ Banners stated ‘Save Our Sons’, and posters were adorned with an image of the Statue of Liberty, with her arm removed by a war plane, with the title: ‘War’s First Casualty’. Huelfer’s research reaffirmed this thesis’s observation that “isolationists used the ‘casualty issue’ to bolster their opposition against involvement.”⁴⁵⁹ US American’s voiced their casualty aversion loud and clear.

Politically, issues surrounding non-intervention became a cross-party issue, which was reflected in a variety of sectors within US society. There was the anti-war league; voices of citizens whose ancestry was either German and Japanese; and US Americans who were concerned that a war in Europe would undermine new social reforms. Harold G. Vatter claimed that young Americans, primarily on the left of the political spectrum, had persuaded themselves that “Wall Street bankers and ‘merchants of death’ had cunningly sold the war to an unsuspecting nation, and naively dismissed unpleasant facts as propaganda.”⁴⁶⁰

Public opinion polls demonstrated that US Americans wished to remain absent from the growing nationalism and militarism in Europe. An opinion poll published in January 1937, revealed: “70 percent felt that US participation in the First World War had been a mistake. To avoid entanglement in future wars, the nation had to avoid the ties that drew it into the last one, which meant steering foreign policy clear of European affairs.”⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁶ Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*, 93.

⁴⁵⁷ Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 231.

⁴⁵⁸ Huelfer, *The “Casualty Issue”*, xi.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁴⁶⁰ H.G. Vatter, *The U.S. Economy in World War II*, (New York: Columbia University Press. 1985), 2.

⁴⁶¹ Huelfer, *The “Casualty Issue”*, 171.

In September, 1940, powerful business leaders formed the America First Committee, which lobbied for US non-intervention in what would become World War Two. The term 'America First' to this day is associated with US isolationism. This thesis asserts that isolation was already ingrained in US culture and society before the 1900s, however events in the 1930s exacerbated an inclination towards remaining neutral rather than becoming involved in military conflict. A poll taken in 1941 revealed that "three-quarters of voters opposed US military intervention on behalf of Europe."⁴⁶² In 1942, John F. Kennedy wrote to his father: "When the tears and blood phase begin and the Bells really start to toll, then will come the great test."⁴⁶³ This is an early acknowledgement of the rally effect - a willingness for US Americans to fight for what they believe in. Yet as Kennedy's words suggest; when the dead begin to return home, US society will question the value of their sacrifice. There is still a perception that the Kennedy family, notably Joseph Kennedy, advocated US military isolation until December 1941.

President F.D. Roosevelt was "a voice crying in an isolationist wilderness."⁴⁶⁴ Yet he too was not a Hawk, he had "fears about the prospects of war and its terrible toll. He had an intense abhorrence of war and a deep apprehension over its consequences."⁴⁶⁵ Pragmatically, from the onset of European war in September 1939, he began implementing policies that were cautious and influenced by USCA. The first step was to prevent the United States from becoming entangled in a conflict. Despite Roosevelt being morally opposed to the actions of European fascists, he understood that US military intervention would not be possible. This decision was founded on his and many US citizens' concerns about the potential casualties the United States could incur. President Roosevelt instead reaffirmed his commitment to their allies, with the offer of alternative measures through economic and diplomatic assistance. In 1939, the United States began accepting orders from the British and French for "4,700 aircraft, costing \$614 million."⁴⁶⁶ Those European countries who opposed fascism would be the United States' first line of defence, as long as their logistics and capabilities could be sustained. This principle was further developed during the Cold War. In addition, the US military strategists addressed within their planning the minimisation of US losses. President Roosevelt balanced a diplomatic posture with the preparations for an inevitable war. The United States focussed on a build-up of US air and maritime power; both of which would

⁴⁶² Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 30.

⁴⁶³ Sandler, *The Letters of John F. Kennedy*, 19.

⁴⁶⁴ Vatter, *The U.S. Economy in World War II*, 1.

⁴⁶⁵ Huelfer, *The "Casualty Issue"*, 167.

⁴⁶⁶ Vatter, *The U.S. Economy in World War II*, 4.

provide fewer casualties. The army also increased their manpower. These increases, however, reflected an intention to keep US ground forces out of combat operations.

World War Two (1941-1945)

On the morning of December 7, 1941, the US Naval Base Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was attacked by the Empire of Japan. Following this first attack, on the same day, subsequent US national interests came under attack from Japanese forces. As an immediate and direct response, the United States declared war on the Empire of Japan on December 8, 1941. On December 11, 1941 the US also declared war on Germany. The total number of US citizens killed on what was considered to be 'home soil' is estimated to have been around 2,000, with over half being killed on the USS Arizona. On December 8, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt requested that Congress declare a state of war between the United States and the Empire of Japan. The words spoken by President Roosevelt have become one of the momentous addresses delivered by an US President in the twentieth century. It was penned in his own hand, with no assistance from speech writers, and it was only on his second draft he added the powerful opening statement: "YESTERDAY, December 7, 1941 a date which will live in infamy..."⁴⁶⁷

The United States firmly believed that the attack was unjustified and they had fairly negotiated with the Empire of Japan through the official diplomatic channels to maintain peace in the Pacific region. President F.D. Roosevelt said in his address that "the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace."⁴⁶⁸ He added: "The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific."⁴⁶⁹

The justification for war with the Empire of Japan was self-defence and protection of the United States. Speaking in a firm and commanding tone, President F.D. Roosevelt willed reluctant citizens to accept a state of war by navigating their deeply-embedded caution (USCA) with reassurances that their treasure and blood would not be wasted unnecessarily and by managing their expectations.

⁴⁶⁷ F. D. Roosevelt, Transcript of Address to Congress requesting a declaration of war, Dec. 8, 1941, https://www.loc.gov/resource/afc1986022.afc1986022_ms2201/?st=text [Accessed 09/05/2019].

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

To support this point, below are highlights from the transcript of President F.D. Roosevelt's speech on December 8, 1941:

Throughout, President F.D. Roosevelt's key word was 'defence':

- "I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost."⁴⁷⁰
- "The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our Nation."⁴⁷¹
- "There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger."⁴⁷²
- "Always will our whole Nation remember the character of the onslaught against us."⁴⁷³
- "I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense."⁴⁷⁴
- "We will not only defend ourselves to the utmost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us."⁴⁷⁵
- "With the unbounding determination of our people we will gain the inevitable triumph so help us God."⁴⁷⁶

President F.D. Roosevelt became a master at addressing the justifications of wartime US losses. Firstly, he assured the people of the United States that the war would be won with an absolute victory. Through the newspapers, radio and cinema newsreels, assurances were presented to the US people that they were "fighting against the morally repugnant ideologies of Nazism, fascism, and militarism,"⁴⁷⁷ in order to defend their four "freedoms – freedom of religion and speech, freedom from fear and want."⁴⁷⁸ There was a clearly-defined enemy, and the sacrifice of their own was justifiable to preserve the US way of life.

To an extent, US society accepted that a war on this scale would inevitably lead to a high number of fatalities. At the conclusion of World War Two, the people of the US accepted that military action had been forced upon their nation by a clearly-defined enemy, and the union required defending.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*, 127.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 127.

Huelfer also recognised in his research that the US casualty issue had to be addressed during World War Two: “American political and military leaders recognized their citizen’s distinct aversion to large wartime casualties and accommodated it in formulating strategy to win the war.”⁴⁷⁹ Huelfer added that the United States’ “strategists aimed to end the war quickly and decisively, hoping this way [would] minimize casualties over the long run.”⁴⁸⁰ For the first time, the United States deployed air power on a huge scale; bombing campaigns were conducted over Europe and Japan in an attempt to “sap enemy strength.”⁴⁸¹ A considerable US ground force was established and trained, which was later used in Europe for operations Overlord and Neptune. US sea power played a critical role in maintaining allied logistics, supplies and movement of personnel throughout. In 1942, in an act of seeking a way to conclude the war as soon as possible, and to significantly reduce US and Allied casualties, the United States, the U.K. and Canada embarked on what would become known as the Manhattan Project. It substantially harnessed research and development in nuclear energy, which resulted in the United States securing the first atomic weapon. Ironically, USCA provided the rationale for the project and more critically it formed the justification for its use on the Empire of Japan.

The justifications for the use of such a weapon centred around saving US lives and ending World War Two. Following these events, similar justifications came from all sectors of US society. George Catlett Marshall, Jr. had remarked that “a democracy could not indulge in a Seven-Years War,”⁴⁸² and the factors that had been constantly on his mind were “casualties, duration, and the Pacific.”⁴⁸³ President Jimmy Carter’s career in the United States Navy had begun during the Second World War and had been serving at sea when the war concluded. He wrote that he was sitting on deck when the ship’s loudspeaker relayed President Truman’s announcement that a “formidable weapon had been dropped on Hiroshima and that he hoped that this would convince the Japanese to surrender. All of us agreed with his decision, because it was generally believed that 500,000 Americans would have been lost in combat”⁴⁸⁴ Carter also wrote that he admired President Truman’s political courage as he made difficult decisions involving “bringing the world war to a close.”⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁷⁹ Huelfer, *The “Casualty Issue”*, 214.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁴⁸² Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 30.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴⁸⁴ Carter, *A Full Life*, 36.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

The triumph of World War Two remained in the hearts and minds of the US peoples' identity, culture and social history. The collective "remained deeply patriotic, nationalistic in their outlook, and committed to their national culture, creed, and identity."⁴⁸⁶ A youthful Henry Kissinger asked President Truman what in his presidency made him most proud; Truman's response was: "We totally defeated our enemies and then brought back a community of nations. I would like to think that only America would have done this."⁴⁸⁷ Truman took pride above all in its humane and democratic values. He wanted to be "remembered not so much for America's victories as for its conciliations."⁴⁸⁸ Samuel P. Huntington observed that World War Two forged "a great common experience,"⁴⁸⁹ and in the years which followed, US strategic ambition was to "preserve peace through strength."⁴⁹⁰

The United States' decision to use the atomic bomb on the Empire of Japan re-shaped the strategic context of international relations and its strategic planning. Coupled with the development of the Soviet Union's nuclear program and its first test in 1949, the United States no longer had mainland strategic geographical isolation from its aggressors. Following an assessment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Bernard Brodie noted that the "chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose."⁴⁹¹ No war, no US losses; an implementation of USCA on a global scale.

⁴⁸⁶ Huntington, *WHO ARE WE?*, 143.

⁴⁸⁷ H. A. Kissinger, *World Order* (London: Penguin Books. 2015), 1.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁸⁹ Huntington, *WHO ARE WE?*, 136.

⁴⁹⁰ R.W. Reagan, 'Peace: Restoring the Margin of Safety', speech at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention, 18 August 1980. <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/8.18.80.html> [Accessed 02/10/2009].

⁴⁹¹ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 52.

Chapter 5: Reluctant Warriors: Implicit Implementations of USCA

As demonstrated, this thesis is not merely saying that US citizens tend to be casualty averse, rather, that throughout US history casualty aversion has been deeply embedded in its elite society and culture, and has manifested in its strategic culture. This is due to the fact that USCA has previously gone unnoticed, been dismissed or misidentified due to its discreet cultural and historical patterns. This chapter highlights implementations of USCA by providing new insights into the socialisation and decision-making processes of elite US citizens.

The purpose of this chapter is to chronologically present examples of elite US citizens considering and implementing USCA from the beginning of the Korean War (1950), to the conclusion of the Obama administration (2017); in particular implementations which were subtle and overlooked. Chapter Seven also contains the third case study, '*Vietnam: The United States' Experience*', which re-examines the Vietnam War, the misattribution of the Vietnam syndrome, and demonstrates how USCA was considered and implemented by elite US citizens during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Unlike previous reviews of the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War, this case study examines cultural traits and behavioural characteristics presented by elite citizens in the overt or discrete implementation of USCA.

Key points:

- Many applications of USCA have been so subtle within the decision-making process that they have gone unnoticed or have been overlooked.
- There is a difference between USCA being overtly and discreetly implemented.
- Its application and implementation have gone unnoticed or have been misattributed.
- Overt applications of USCA have been acknowledged during the latter part of the twentieth century, for example, Vietnam syndrome. However, the question of 'why' they arose has remained incomplete.
- This thesis differs from previous scholarly explanations because it has joined together examples of disparate and fragmented implementations of USCA, to demonstrate a consistency of USCA in US strategic culture, and strengthen an overall understanding of the United States' strategic culture.
- Highlighted implementations of USCA often have an established explanation, in particular the operational and foreign military policy decisions which are a matter of public record.
- This chapter is not an attempt to distort the history of US foreign policy through its retelling.

- This thesis suggests that the United States and its elite citizens themselves have not considered USCA to be a cultural characteristic which has influenced its conduct during periods of conflict and formed the direction of its foreign policies.
- USCA is deeply embedded within US culture.
- USCA continues to be embedded by US elites due to the political systems and processes which govern the United States.
- The elite socialisation process instils cultural characteristics in the individual which are underpinned by USCA.
- Naturally, elites vary in their application of USCA. There is a difference between those who have served in the United States military and those who did not. This can also be applied to those who attended University/College and those who did not. Each stage of the socialisation process provides its own principles and fosters a particular way of thinking.
- Also, there are differing perspectives of those born and educated in the United States in comparison to elites who became US citizens at a later stage in their life (primary socialisation already in place).

Context:

- Prior to World War Two “it appeared that the United States enjoyed an unencumbered freedom to choose whether it would enter an overseas war or not. The dimensions of that war and its consequences destroyed that illusion.”¹
- The US had maintained its mainland infrastructure, economy and was the first atomic power.
- In the aftermath of World War Two and during the dismantling of the former empires, the US forged ahead in assuming a role of leadership in the new international structure, establishing alliances despite domestic apprehension to this new position in the international arena.

However, by 1946 the State Department (DOS) was “floundering”² due to growing hostility with the Soviet Union in Europe. Diplomatically, “Washington was used to the traditional pattern of diplomacy and physics: action, reaction: action, reaction. But with Moscow the pattern broke. The Soviets seemed intent on quietly, but aggressively, trying to expand their territory and their

¹ H.W. Rood, *American Foreign Policy and American Strategy*. Draft of a work never published. 26/08/1983, 34.

² Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 59.

influence, no matter whether the United States played nice or acted stern.”³ To sustain the protection of its national interests and support its allies in Europe it had to wield both its soft and hard power by deterring “adversaries from initiating combat.”⁴ However, US strategic thinking naively considered possession of an atomic bomb would reduce troop numbers required for deployment into military combat (fewer troops, fewer casualties).

As this chapter demonstrates, the expectation that the nuclear deterrent would be a panacea for deterring military escalation and reducing military personnel, were not met, especially when a power vacuum arose because on August 29, 1949, the Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb and “almost no one in the US government had expected this so soon. Intelligence reports suggested that the Soviets were still several years from developing a working bomb.”⁵

Korea: 1950-1953

5,720,000⁶ US troops were committed to military operations in Korea between 1950-1953 under its policy of containment. There were 36,574 US deaths (33,739 are recorded as battlefield deaths).⁷ Max Hastings noted that in total the United Nations suffered “142,000 casualties in the war to save South Korea from communist domination,”⁸ and US deaths in the three years were “only narrowly outstripped by those suffered in Vietnam over more than ten.”⁹ Commentators have suggested that the Korean War is one of the United States' forgotten wars; and although this thesis does not disagree, it seeks to answer the question of why this is the case.

Throughout the American narrative, the Korean War is considered to be an “episode in the Cold War, and not a successful one,”¹⁰ remaining a diplomatic challenge for the United States to the present day. Comparatively, the body of literature which examines the United States' military operations in Korea remains very limited and US Korean Veterans resented that “their memories and sacrifices seem[ed] so much less worthy of attention than those of Vietnam veterans.”¹¹ In 1980

³ Ibid., 59.

⁴ Russell F Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1973), 398.

⁵ Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 99.

⁶ Nese F. DeBruyne, Congressional Research Service, American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics, April 26, 2017. [https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/World War One-casualties112018.pdf](https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/World%20War%20One-casualties112018.pdf) [Accessed 08/03/2021].

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ M. Hastings, *The Korean War* (London: Pan Books. 1987), xiii.

⁹ Ibid., xiii.

¹⁰ Piehler, *Remembering War*, 159.

¹¹ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 410-411.

whilst running for the office of President, Ronald W. Reagan acknowledged that the Korean War was the United States' first "no win war."¹² Those who have reviewed their experiences in Korea empathised with these veterans' frustrations and suggested that it was "the most difficult war the United States had ever had to fight."¹³ This thesis is inclined to agree with Hastings, though specifies that it was the most difficult of the United States' twentieth century military interventions.

On June 24, 1950, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea invaded The Republic of Korea (South Korea) by crossing over the 38th parallel. Under the belief that this action was sponsored by the Soviet Union, President Truman acted decisively by requesting a meeting of the United Nations Security Council to seek authorisation and to form a coalition, notably with the United Kingdom. The United Nations were pressed for immediate action, and on June 25 and 27, 1950, the UN Security Council passed directives urging for a ceasefire and for all member nations to provide assistance to The Republic of Korea. These measures passed because the Soviet Union had recently boycotted the Security Council and chose not to participate.

Domestically, President Harry S. Truman did not press for a Congressional declaration of war. Instead, he classified the Korean conflict as a "police action" operating with the authority of the Security Council. Unclassified presidential documents from 1950 reveal a clear recommendation to President Truman: "The invasion of Southern Korea cannot be regarded as any isolated incident. It alters all strategic realities of the area and is a clear indication of the pattern of aggression under a general international Communist plan."¹⁴

Further recommendations included:

- The immediate evacuation of all US citizens.
- For orders to be given to General Douglas MacArthur to the extent he could assist with force if required to protect US citizens.
- Permission for South Korea to be given supplies, military equipment and ammunition.
- For the United States to respond with "quick affirmative action"¹⁵

¹² R.W. Reagan, 'Peace: Restoring the Margin of Safety', (Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention, Chicago, Illinois, 18 August 1980). <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/8.18.80.html> [Accessed 02/10/2009].

¹³ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 410.

¹⁴ H. S. Truman Administration File: Notes requiring presidential decision. Notes and recommendations 1950. (The Korean War and its Origins: H. S. Truman Library Collections), 5. <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/notes-and-recommendations?documentid=NA&pagenumber=1> [Accessed 09/03/2021].

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

- That the programs for military aid to Indo-China, Burma and Thailand programs to be “immediately executed with at least some token deliveries.”¹⁶

Under the leadership of President Harry S. Truman, the United States developed the policy of ‘containment’, which has also been referred to as the ‘*Truman Doctrine*’. Containment pledged that the United States would support democratic countries with military, economic and political assistance to any nation threatened by Soviet supported communist movements and dictatorships.

George F. Kennan first used the word *containment* in the context of a foreign policy in his *Long Telegram* sent to Washington D.C. from Moscow on February 22, 1946. For Kennan *containment* was as a “political strategy for combating a political threat.”¹⁷ He proposed aid and propaganda (soft power), for example the European Recovery Program (ERP), and the 1948 Marshall Plan of which he was one of the key architects whilst at the DOS, and which turned into one of America’s greatest foreign policy triumphs. For Kennan *containment* was “not pistols and tanks.”¹⁸

Furthermore, Kennan advised that the United States policy toward the Soviet Union “must be... long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies,”¹⁹ because for Kennan “political warfare is the logical application of Clausewitz’s doctrine in time of peace.”²⁰

Further recommendations from Kennan included:

- Only fight the communists in places crucial to US interests.
- Only fight where the US has a reasonable chance of success, like Greece.
- Ignore places where intervention appeared hopeless, like in China.
- Don’t intervene in nations of peripheral geopolitical significance, like Guatemala.²¹

Despite Kennan's experiences working with the emerging power of the Soviet Union in Moscow, his observations and recommendations were overlooked as he had little influence within President Truman’s inner circle. Kennan opposed the Truman Doctrine as *containment* was fundamentally interpreted as “primarily a military doctrine, so containing the Soviets at a given point meant

¹⁶ Ibid., 6.

¹⁷ N. Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Picador. 2009), 3.

¹⁸ Ibid., 79.

¹⁹ Ibid., 76.

²⁰ Ibid., 83.

²¹ Ibid., 71.

drawing the sword,"²² and this was not how he had intended it to be used. Instead, Paul Nitze's approach was adopted. Nitze defined *containment* as "a military strategy for combating a military threat."²³

Truman's decisions during the Korean War had many far-reaching consequences. Truman wanted to keep Korea as a limited war, avoiding a nuclear war at all costs. Without an all-out effort to win, the war became a lengthy stalemate. By avoiding a declared war, Truman set a precedent that other presidents have followed. The nation has subsequently fought several conflicts without ever being officially 'at war.' Still in its infancy, the Korean conflict was the first major test of the UN's ability to accomplish its goals.

On June 26, 1950, President Truman authorised the military to engage in action against North Korean forces; this authorisation included the use of ground troops along with air and naval power. Truman "attempted instantly to shift his military gears and halt and punish the Communist Koreans not with all-out atomic retaliation but with military strength proportioned to the threat."²⁴ Truman also considered that following the conclusion of World War Two, the largest US troop convergence overseas was the four divisions of the army stationed in Japan under the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur, allowing for a quicker mobilisation of the troops when required.

The justification of military force was enhanced by elements within the US government of the United States and the administration of President Truman, who were influenced by the analogy of Munich. The lessons of Munich translated into military action being required sooner rather than later, despite great efforts to enforce appeasement in 1938 by the British - this did not stop the escalation of war within Europe. David Ryan highlighted: "The lessons of Munich exercised considerable influence as the origins of the Cold War and the Korean War."²⁵ Additionally, the Truman administration was careful in its use of terminology, the word 'war' was limited in its use because there was no consent from Congress. Thus, military operation was classified and described as police action with strategically limited aims and objectives set. Between June and September 1950, the policy of the United States was to restore the status quo by moving the North Koreans back to the North, past the 38th Parallel.

²² Ibid., 79.

²³ Ibid., 79.

²⁴ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 383.

²⁵ Ryan, 'Vietnam', victory culture and Iraq', 111-138: 114.

On June 27, 1950, communist forces entered Seoul and therefore US military action had to be scaled and escalated in an attempt to secure a successful outcome. On September 15 1950, General Douglas MacArthur oversaw the Inchon landings. As a result of this military success, in the period between September and November 1950, military objectives of the United States in Korea were broadened to include an instruction to General MacArthur to pass over the 38th Parallel and remove the enemy. General Matthew Ridgway re-called: "Our original objective – to repel aggression – underwent drastic change once the Inchon success had put us in a position to push north across the 38th Parallel. We then tacitly altered our mission to encompass the occupation and unification of all Korea."²⁶

Domestically, President Truman and the Democratic party were pursuing a victory in Korea to rebuff and appease the disgruntled Republicans. In addition, a significant factor for President Truman's change in strategic policy was the relationship with the South Korean President, President Syngman Rhee. President Rhee maintained a very direct and simple approach to the US, however, by this stage the relationship was increasingly strained. During 1950, President Rhee advocated that his forces would cross the 38th Parallel to unify Korea with or without the help of US troops. As far as President Rhee was concerned: "Since the communists had started the Korean War, the legality of the 38th Parallel as a political boundary between South and North Korea was now questionable."²⁷

Initially, the Truman administration responded with a reluctance to escalate, with the military arguing that it was not prepared, and military personnel numbers were too low to undertake an operation of this scale. Additionally, President Truman believed that the pressure to unify Korea by itself would be a step too far for the US public, as Korean Southern forces had been defeated. Despite this reluctance, the United States military began to move towards the 38th Parallel.

During the winter of 1950, the situation on the ground deteriorated for the United States and its allies. The effects of demobilisation following World War II had left combat readiness low and most military equipment was from World War II, although serviceable. There were major issues with logistics, such as a general lack of supplies for the troops. Additionally, US troops were caught out by the cold Korean winters, and began to freeze as their issued uniforms lacked adequate protection from the harsh reality of the severe winter elements. These shortfalls caused serious difficulties for troops operating in the mountainous terrain of Korea and as disease began to rise, morale amongst

²⁶ Park, 'American Foreign Policy in Korea and Vietnam', 35.

²⁷ Ibid., 35.

the troops waned. As a response to a US move towards the 38th parallel in November 1950, the People's Republic of China sent troops into North Korea to help with communist efforts. In 1951, American military operations in Korea were upgraded from 'police action' to the status of a war. The United States became alarmed by Chinese intervention, as it did not want to be in direct military combat with Chinese forces and risk further military escalation with the communists. Therefore, the official US policy between November 1950 and June 1953 was to continue fighting to restore and maintain 38th parallel whilst seeking a diplomatic solution.

Closer examination of US discussion and decisions on Korea reveal that the White House and the DOD did not wish to escalate the atomic issue. General MacArthur, however, made his views on the matter clear and direct to the US public: "There is no substitute for victory and war's very object is victory."²⁸ MacArthur firmly believed that the United States could win if it so chose, and suggested the use of a nuclear weapon. Russell F. Weigley assessed the views of MacArthur as "voicing a view of the nature of war that was not only commonplace among Americans since the Civil War and the Indian wars but that could readily seem a reasonable extension of the American military's own customary strategy of annihilation."²⁹ From their personal experiences with working with MacArthur, both Kennan and Nitze considered him to be "stubborn, imperious, even egomaniacal."³⁰ Nitze also believed he was unfit to exercise the UN command. As a consequence, for General MacArthur's rhetoric, on April 11, 1951, President Truman relieved the General of his duties in Korea. This action was unpopular with the US people but so were the escalating military engagements and the loss of US lives.

The introduction of the atomic weapon had established a new dimension within US strategic culture; a consensus was formed within the administration that to respond with atomic weapons would be "indeed disproportionate both in morality and in expediency; it would have risked both a holocaust of Soviet retaliation and the possibility of using up the relatively small store of atomic bombs against a minor power, to cite only two considerations of expediency."³¹ Truman, Kennan and Nitze agreed that in the context of Korea nuclear weapons were not to be used and "only in the unlikely event

²⁸ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 398.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 391.

³⁰ Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 123.

³¹ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 383.

that we were certain their use would save the lives of Americans, would not widen the conflict and would not incite international outrage."³²

Despite the assurance of victory against the North Koreans, an earlier conclusion to an escalating US casualty count was a cultural reluctance in Washington to use a nuclear weapon in Korea, as Washington would risk a retaliation from Moscow, the outcome of which would be too catastrophic for US civilians. It was agreed within the Truman administration that a diplomatic solution should be found.

As mentioned above, by 1951 the military situation in Korea had deteriorated to a point no longer favourable to the United States and its allies. Chinese intervention had massively increased the North's troop numbers and due to their culture were more willing to sacrifice their military personnel for the greater cause; in contrast, the US were not. The justification for US troops was no longer sustaining a positive public opinion; strategic decisions were being questioned within the politic, media and military. Any additional escalation of military operations in Korea to gain a victory would require a further increase in US troops on the ground. Realistically this was unthinkable, as continued tensions in Europe had become the prime concern for halting Soviet Union aggression; resources were required to be diverted there. Dean Acheson later stated that during the MacArthur hearings: "The United States could not afford to govern its entire foreign policy by the single objective of victory in Korea."³³

In May 1951, President Truman and his administration instructed George F. Kennan to contact the Russian ambassador to the United Nations, Jacob Malik. Both parties agreed the Korean War could and should be resolved politically. Kennan had disagreed with the decision for the United States to enter Korea, especially under the United Nations flag rather than the Stars and Stripes of the United States. However, the United States had decided that Korea was not the best place to fight a war against communism. The negotiations were initially drawn out due to the issue of repatriation of prisoners of war, though on June 27, 1953, an armistice was signed and the Korean Demilitarised Zone was created. The 38th Parallel was the "status quo ante bellum, and to move north of it could lead to armed conflict with the USSR or communist China."³⁴ Both Kennan and Nitze argued for

³² Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 125.

³³ Park, 'American Foreign Policy in Korea and Vietnam.', 37.

³⁴ Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 119.

caution and restraint. John Foster Dulles (Hawk) advocated for the obliteration of the 38th Parallel if the opportunity arose.

Re-examining the decision-making processes undertaken by elite US citizens during the Korean War supports the theory that USCA was being implemented during this critical moment in US history. Its implementation, however, was subtle and many of these elites were not fully aware that they were actively choosing a casualty-aversion strategy. As demonstrated below, these elite citizens of the United States political and military establishments were implementing USCA, which had already been deeply ingrained within US society and culture.

The US made the conscious decision to conduct itself unilaterally even though they were working as part of a UN coalition. All US military personnel remained under US command throughout, and the US made all decisions regarding military engagements with the intention to implement a strategy which served their best interests. The decision to explore peace negotiations with the Soviet was taken solely by Washington D.C. in order to maintain US control once the official process of diplomacy began.

The push to the 38th Parallel was originally implemented as Chinese troops began to move into the north of Korea, substantially raising the potential for US casualties. As a consequence, de-escalation was justified in order to save US lives. The Joint Chiefs unanimously agreed that the United States “should not be pulled into a war with China.”³⁵ In addition, the NSC 68 Report from 1950 had advised not to engage in military action if there was a risk of escalation to atomic warfare. As tensions rose with China, negotiation was strongly advocated.

There were shifts within US society towards a more casualty-averse approach. The parents of missing servicemen made written requests to President Truman to instigate peace talks with North Korea, with the exchange of prisoners. Mr. and Mrs. Ellison wrote: “So please Mr. President, why not have peace in Korea.”³⁶ A veiled display of casualty aversion was asserted by the US electorate who exercised their right to vote for change when in 1952 they elected Dwight D. Eisenhower to the White House. Responding to the growing discontent, the Eisenhower campaign assured the US

³⁵ Minutes of the National Security Council Meeting with Harry S. Truman, November 28, 1950, 6. <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/minutes-national-security-council-meeting-harry-s-truman?documentid=NA&pagenumber=5> [Accessed 09/03/2021].

³⁶ Mr. and Mrs. Ellison to Harry S. Truman with a Reply from William D. Hassett, June 6, 1952, 4. <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/mr-and-mrs-ellison-harry-s-truman-reply-william-d-hassett?documentid=NA&pagenumber=1> [Accessed 09/03/2021].

public that they “intended both to extricate the country from Korean entanglement and to ensure against further involvements of the Korean type.”³⁷

There was growing concern over whether or not access would be granted to the US military cemetery if the Chinese and North Koreans were successful in their counter attacks. As a consequence, “In March 1951 the Defense Department decided that the bodies of all American service people who died in Korea would be returned to the United States for burial.”³⁸ When an US life is lost in military service, endeavours are made to repatriate them to US soil and honour those who had fallen in service to their Republic.

Following confirmation from the DOS communist volunteers started returning to Korea. There was anxiety amongst the senior Executive Branch members that events were heading towards a general war with China. During deliberations, A. W. Barkley (the Vice President) became increasingly concerned that all three service secretaries had “indicated a tragic manpower shortage.”³⁹ Barkley’s response was: “we can’t put many more men out there”⁴⁰ and cited the discrepancies in the estimations of North Korean forces being provided: “A week ago he thought there were only 100,000. Maybe there aren’t 200,000; maybe there are 300,000 facing us.”⁴¹ Vice President Barkley concluded that “We can’t hold out if the Chinese communists go for an all out offensive. What do we do?”⁴²

General Marshall's opinion was that the United States should continue with “the United Nations approach to the Korean question, even if this led to “difficult decisions for us.”⁴³ It was essential to keep a unified approach in the UN General Marshall reiterated that all three service secretaries agreed that the United States shouldn’t get “ourselves involved, individually or as a United nations matter, in a general war with China.”⁴⁴

Dean Acheson (Secretary of State) stated: “The answer is easy, we want to terminate it. We don’t want to beat China in Korea -- we can’t. We don’t want to beat China any place -- we can’t.”⁴⁵

³⁷ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 399.

³⁸ Piehler, *Remembering War*, 155.

³⁹ Minutes of the NSC Meeting with Truman, Nov 28, 1950, 10-11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 13

Acheson also asserted that US airpower should only be used if it was “absolutely essential for the safety of United States troops for us to bomb Chinese Air Bases in Manchuria... But we can’t terminate if we go into Manchuria on our own.”⁴⁶ Acheson was concerned that the Soviet Union would “cheerfully get in it,”⁴⁷ increasing the number of required troops: “We would just get into a bottomless pit with China, Russian and American involvement. It would get us no place. It would bleed us dry.”⁴⁸ Acheson believed the way forward was to ‘hold’ and rebuild forces and strength, especially in Europe and to get out of Korea as quickly as possible.

It was recommended to President Truman on December 11, 1950, to consider a ceasefire. The recommendation contained the caveat that any ceasefire “does not place U.N. forces at a disadvantage... details of the cease-fire should be negotiated in order to protect the security of U.N. forces before a ceasefire is accepted.”⁴⁹

The Korean War lacked a decisive victory and as a consequence, US society came to consider it an, “unpleasant and costly military action that they wanted to forget.”⁵⁰ For those directly affected, notably the military, “the political restrictions placed on the use of US power fostered a ‘never again’ mentality within the Armed Forces.”⁵¹ Despite this, in 1954, the decision was taken by Congress to rename ‘Armistice Day’ as ‘Veterans Day’:

It was a day to honor the participants of all American wars. A House committee supporting this change declared that the veterans of Korea and World War II had, like their World War I comrades, fought for the same noble objective: the advance of a ‘permanent peace by halting aggression of those who would destroy our democratic ideals.’⁵²

This gesture by Congress extended the act of remembrance to all US citizens who had fallen while in service to their country. It also served as a reminder to all US Americans that their country’s freedom comes at a cost. As they mark their thanks and respect, this also forms part of their socialisation, as each generation of US Americans passes USCA on to the next generation.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 13

⁴⁷ Ibid., 13

⁴⁸ Ibid., 14

⁴⁹ Minutes of National Security Council Meeting, December 11, 1950, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/minutes-national-security-council-meeting?documentid=NA&pagenumber=1> [Accessed 09/03/2021].

⁵⁰ Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*, 157.

⁵¹ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 33.

⁵² Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*, 133.

To summarise: the Korean War between 1950-1953 was costly for the United States in terms of the number of citizens who were killed on the battlefield. By the time the peace treaty was in place, 36,574⁵³ US Americans had lost their lives. The Korean War reinforced the 'never again mentality'. When hostilities in Vietnam required military intervention, the intention of the United States elites was to re-review lessons from Korea and implement their learnings in Vietnam. USCA was implemented though it was not a direct approach; for instance, there were no grand speeches announcing it, and instead those making crucial decisions, unknowingly or discreetly, implemented measures to attempt to keep US troop casualties to a minimum.

- A cultural characteristic of the United States is to measure its success through its casualty figures. The United States draws success rates from its casualty numbers.
- The very nature of applying lessons from past military undertakings cements USCA in US strategic culture.
- A Korean Syndrome would have been another instance of USCA being articulated under a different name.

Case Study: Vietnam: The United States' Experience

"We can't be the prisoners of Vietnam."⁵⁴ - John Kerry, Secretary of State (2013-2017).

The Vietnam War is uniquely important to the United States but not quite for the reasons that other scholars and writers imply. This case study establishes that the Vietnam War is not the sole cause of USCA. Unlike previous military engagements, the US experience in Vietnam significantly drew attention to US society's aversion to incurring military casualties. This study provides examples of USCA being implemented during the Vietnam War, supporting this thesis' argument that USCA was already embedded within US strategic culture before the controversial term 'Vietnam Syndrome' was coined. Additionally, this thesis explores and highlights a selection of US elite's socialisation, influences and experiences, to demonstrate how casualty aversion has remained embedded within US society and culture.

From the outset, the United States projected a reluctance to become involved in Vietnam and both President Truman and President Eisenhower were unwilling to commit US combat forces to the region. President Truman advocated that the United States should refrain from being associated

⁵³ Congressional Research Service, American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL32492.pdf> [Accessed 26/4/2017 & 07/05/2018].

⁵⁴ Kerry, Remarks at the Vietnam War Summit, 01/05/2016.

with French colonialism and more importantly, US military priorities needed to be focused on Europe and Japan. For President Truman and his administration, the theory of containment became essential in halting the spread of communist influence around the globe. When the United States first made the decision to support the French and later President Diem's government in South Vietnam, it was taken in the context of other significant world events which were unfolding. Noted examples being the Berlin Blockade (24 June, 1948 – 12 May, 1949), the communist revolution in China (1949–50), growing communist influence in the Middle East and Africa, followed by the Korean War.

President Eisenhower refused to intervene in Vietnam whilst the French were losing their eight-year war there. However, as tensions escalated with the Soviet Union, "the United States went to great lengths to minimize American involvement."⁵⁵ The policy remained in place until it was deemed by the Kennedy administration necessary to increase the US presence. Eisenhower's administration did not want a repetition of the Korean War as it was still fresh in the minds of US citizens, especially of the political and military elites. Furthermore, the Eisenhower administration actively implemented a strategy of deterrence, despite it being deemed a "negative kind of strategy,"⁵⁶ due to its complexity. The administration was determined not to become involved in local and limited wars or a general war with the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China.

By the 1960s, the situation in Vietnam had deteriorated and though the reluctance to become involved in Vietnam remained, simultaneously the policy of *containment* was gaining momentum and the idea that: "the fall of Indochina would bring about in rapid succession the collapse of the other nations in Southeast Asia."⁵⁷ The compromise was to increase the number of US advisors and military personnel on the ground; the *gradual escalation* of US military personnel was an implementation of USCA. From the very beginning, measures were taken to ensure that US military personnel would not be put in unnecessary danger. Military involvement in Korea was reviewed and lessons drawn were incorporated into the strategic planning process for Vietnam; as Walton reaffirmed: "They were determined to 'get it right this time' by conducting an effective, highly controlled limited war."⁵⁸ As gradual escalation had not been intended, emphasis was given to thinking that limited numbers on the ground equalled limited numbers of US casualties.

⁵⁵ Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*, 165.

⁵⁶ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 398.

⁵⁷ Herring, *America's Longest War*, 12.

⁵⁸ C.D. Walton, *The Myth of Inevitable US Defeat in Vietnam*, (London: Frank Cass. 2002), 19.

The troop numbers were determined by political processes and a decision-making process which sought to find the number of troops would be acceptable to the US public, in preparation for when US soldiers began to return home injured or in caskets. This was not a military assessment decision, although recommendations were made, which at times, requested high numbers of military personnel to be sent. However, USCA was so ingrained into US thinking and processes that many US elites were most likely unaware that their decisions were influenced by this principle.

President John F. Kennedy (1961-1963)

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy declared: “Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.”⁵⁹ Kennedy predicted that America would maintain its power and influence: “let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house,”⁶⁰ adding; “since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround this globe.”⁶¹ Despite the powerful rhetoric of a national leader who was willing to defend nation and allies, Kennedy asserted: “Now the trumpet summons us again – not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need – not a call to battle, though embattled we are – but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and years out, ‘rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation’ – a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.”⁶² Throughout his short presidency, Kennedy undertook the role of Commander in Chief seriously: “I do not shrink from this responsibility – I welcome it.”⁶³ Although it is probable that he and the American people were not aware of it at the time, he displayed traits and oversaw policies associated with the USCA, which were especially evident in his policies towards the escalating situation in Vietnam.

Born in 1917, Kennedy spent a lot of his childhood surrounded by his siblings, in particular forming a close relationship, and rivalry, with his older brother Joseph. By early adulthood, Kennedy had become a thinker with an avid interest in history, and in the late 1930s travelled to Europe twice. These visits included Germany, Italy, Poland, Turkey and Russia. With his father Joseph Kennedy Sr.

⁵⁹ J.F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address on 20 January 1961, in *The Speeches of President John F. Kennedy* (Copyright: Filibust Publishing. 2015), 17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 19.

-serving as the US ambassador to Great Britain in London, his interest in international relations flourished and his senior thesis entitled '*Appeasement at Munich*' which was later published under the title '*Why England Slept*' and became a bestseller.

During World War Two, John F. Kennedy served in a combat role in the South Pacific. On August 1, 1943, his vessel sank following a collision with a Japanese destroyer. Two of his men were instantly killed. Although deemed a hero for getting some injured men to safety, Kennedy was "sobered by the experience."⁶⁴ Kennedy wrote to his parents: "It was a terrible thing though, losing those two men... It certainly brought home how real the war is."⁶⁵ In a letter to Inga Arvad, he wrote: "The war is a dirty business"⁶⁶ and that "America's energies are divided: he wants to kill but he also is trying desperately to prevent himself from being killed."⁶⁷

During 1944, his older brother Joseph Patrick Kennedy Jr. was killed in military action leaving the family devastated. Kennedy's experiences during this period of his life remained with him during his years in the White House. During his presidential campaign, John F. Kennedy expressed his views openly in respect to the use of atomic weapons. He said to the former member of the Atomic Energy Commission, Thomas E. Murray: "I will earnestly seek an overall disarmament agreement of which limitations upon nuclear weapons tests, weapons grade fissionable material, biological and chemical warfare agents will be essential and integral part."⁶⁸

The Kennedy administration did implement caution and USCA in its use of military power and intervention, and throughout his presidency Kennedy expressed his concerns in resorting to US military intervention, especially in Vietnam. For example, in an open letter (dated September, 1961) he stated: "I do not believe that war can solve any of the problems facing the world today. But the decision is not ours alone."⁶⁹ Additionally, he announced that: "The security of our country and the peace of the world are the objectives of our [security] policy. But in these dangerous days when both these objectives are threatened, we must prepare for all eventualities. The ability to survive coupled with the will to do so therefore are essential to our country."⁷⁰

⁶⁴ M.W. Sandler, ed., *The Letters of John F. Kennedy*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013), p. 5.

⁶⁵ J.F. Kennedy, Letter dated September 12 1943: J. F. Kennedy to his parents, in M.W. Sandler, ed, *The Letters of John F. Kennedy*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013), p.29.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 295.

Robert McNamara recalled President Kennedy asking his cabinet officials and members of the National Security Council to read Barbara Tuchman's book *The Guns of August*: "He said it graphically portrayed how Europe's leaders had bungled into the debacle of World War I. And emphasized: 'I don't ever want to be in that position.' Kennedy told us after we had done our reading, 'We are not going to bungle into war.'" ⁷¹ McNamara added that "throughout his presidency, Kennedy seemed to keep that lesson in mind." ⁷² This was one way to highlight and make sure his cabinet understood his thinking on the issue of war. Tuchman's book struck a chord with Kennedy following its publication in January, 1962 and further solidified the views he had been expressing since earlier adulthood.

McNamara's thinking on international relations had been influenced by George F. Kennan and the infamous article in *Foreign Affairs* in July, 1947, which he considered "a sensible basis for decisions about national security and the application of Western military force." ⁷³ The increased posturing from the Soviet Union gave McNamara's Pentagon a substantial workload. The aggressive actions by the Soviet Union in Berlin (1961), the developing relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba which led to the Cuban missile crisis (1962), justified the United States efforts to protect the countries that were vulnerable to the domino effect; the primary national security consideration was to ensure that none of these 'flash points' escalated to a nuclear war.

The national security objective for President Kennedy was "security for the nation at the lowest possible cost." ⁷⁴ McNamara set out with the best of intentions to guide the Pentagon. He recalled: "The objective of the Defense Department was clear to me from the start: to defend the nation at minimal risk and minimal cost, and whenever we got into combat, with minimal loss of life." ⁷⁵ The acknowledgement of minimal loss of life as an objective is an expression of USCA. For this to be stated by an US elite, highlights the importance of USCA in the decision-making process, which has usually been overlooked in formal reviews of the grand strategy of President Kennedy's Defense Department. McNamara did not have to acknowledge this concern within his publication, yet he believed it warranted it. Within his justification for his part in the war, he declared that despite

⁷¹ R S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1996), 96.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 96.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

reports of escalating tensions on the ground in Vietnam, it was not considered an immediate priority as there were a “multitude of problems we confronted.”⁷⁶

The Kennedy administration had taken their eyes off Vietnam and continued with President Eisenhower’s strategy of a limited engagement of sending advisors and arms to support South Vietnam. The escalation of the communist threats led to contradictions in their policy implementations: “We operated on two premises that ultimately proved contradictory. One was that the fall of South Vietnam to Communism would threaten the security of the United States and the Western World. The other was that only the South Vietnamese could defend their nation, and America should limit its role to providing training and logistical support.”⁷⁷

By 1961, the challenging global context required assurances from the US that it would be willing to support its allies in their commitment to halt the expansion of communism, especially in Europe. The US had to show its “enemies and allies the United States lived up to its commitment.”⁷⁸ In response to concerns over South Vietnam, the Kennedy administration sent additional money, arms and advisers, including General Maxwell Taylor to report on the situation. In a letter to President Diem dated October 24, 1961, President Kennedy wrote: “Let me assure you again that the United States is determined to help Viet-Nam preserve its independence, protect its people against Communist assassins, and build a better life through economic growth.”⁷⁹ Assurances were sent despite reports coming back to Washington that more troops were required.

President Kennedy had a “distaste for diagnosis without remedy.”⁸⁰ His closest advisors knew he was cautious about committing US troops to military operations and that he “did not like the situation.”⁸¹ Their conflicting advice exacerbated his indecision on troop escalation. Recorded in Paul Nitze’s personnel notes (hand written) was a summary of the meeting held with the President on November 10, 1961.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 277.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁷⁸ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 5-6.

⁷⁹ J.F. Kennedy, Letter dated 24 October 1961 to President Ngo Dinh Diem, in M.W. Sandler, (ed.) *The Letters of John F. Kennedy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2013), 319.

⁸⁰ J. F. Kennedy, Letter dated 7 September 1961 to Open Letter, Fellow Americans in M.W. Sandler (ed.), *The Letters of John F. Kennedy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013), 322.

⁸¹ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 40.

Comments from these notes include:

- McNamara declared: “We need troops.”
- Dean Rusk “followed up by saying that ‘adding three thousand men would give the United States a chance to knock back the insurgency.’”
- In the discussion about troops, President Kennedy was firm: “Don’t say we commit. Don’t want to put troops in.”
- Nitze’s summary also noted: “Proceed with caution. Not putting in combat troops.”
- Kennedy did agree to technical assistance and suggested that the allies were to be asked to share even this burden: “Make it multilateral. They have the same commitment.”
- The meeting ended with a fateful remark by Dean Rusk: “Our prestige is already involved.”⁸²

Opportunities for decisive military action against North Vietnam were not taken, nor was a decision on commitment or withdrawal. Consequently, the situation deteriorated on the ground and support from the United States was required to keep South Vietnam free from communism. Combat troops eventually followed.

Paul Nitze worked within the inner Kennedy circle, though was not present during crucial debates about Vietnam, contrary to being portrayed as “one of the men ever eager to get the country into war.”⁸³ Nitze took “pride in his efforts to stop the Vietnam War both early and late in the conflict. He was not as proud about the middle, when he missed his opportunity to actually change things.”⁸⁴ Whilst serving at the NSA (1961-1963), he warned against military escalation. His experiences while working in the Truman administration informed this position: overseeing the Korean war he had advised US policy in regards to Ho Chi Minh’s expulsion of the French of Vietnam. Nitze argued forcefully against ground troops and if the US were to fight, it had to be with air and naval forces.

In March 1962, John Kenneth Galbraith, a trusted advisor and US ambassador in India, directly raised his concerns with President Kennedy about the escalation of US forces in Vietnam, and the perception of replacing the French as a colonial military force. Galbraith was forthright - he believed a continued and increased US presence would increasingly arouse resentment in South Vietnam. Galbraith did not believe that the Soviet Union had been “clever enough to fix it,”⁸⁵ though he

⁸² Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 180.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁸⁵ J. F. Kennedy, Open Letter, 7 September 7 1961., 322.

acknowledged that “they couldn’t be more pleased than to have us spend our billions in these distant jungles where it does us no good for them no harm.”⁸⁶

On February 18 1963, President John F. Kennedy received a letter from an US citizen Bobbie Lou Pendergrass, sister of a fallen soldier in Vietnam. It read:

Dear Mr President... They were wars that our country were fighting, and everyone here knew that our sons and brothers were giving their lives for their country. I can’t help but feel that giving one’s life for one’s country is one thing, but being sent to a country where half our country has never even heard of and being shot at without even a chance to shoot back is another thing altogether! ...can the small number of our boys over in Viet Nam possibly be doing enough good to justify the awful number of casualties?⁸⁷

Bobbie Lou Pendergrass added: “Those fellows are just sitting ducks in those darn helicopters. If a war is worth fighting – isn’t it worth fighting to win?”⁸⁸ The statements contained in Bobbie Lou Pendergrass’ letter represent the questions US citizens would continue to ask until 1975. They represent a message of grief and contain the beliefs which are embedded into US Americans regarding their country and its choices of war. President Kennedy’s response on March 6, 1963, delivered his condolences, and he added: “Americans are in Viet Nam because we have determined that this country must not fall under Communist domination... Your brother was in Viet Nam because the threat to Vietnamese people is, in the long run, a threat to the Free World community, it is threatened throughout the world.”⁸⁹

On November 14, 1963, President Kennedy made his last public statement on Vietnam. He stated: “The most important program, of course, is our national security, but I don’t want the United States to have to put troops there.”⁹⁰ It has been inferred that before his trip to Dallas, Kennedy ordered Michael Forrestal, one of the chief aides to national security advisor McGeorge Bundy, to prepare a study of every option he had in Vietnam, including, “how to get out of there.”⁹¹

⁸⁶ Ibid., 322.

⁸⁷ B.L. Pendergrass, Letter dated 18 February 1963. Bobbie Lou Pendergrass to J. F. Kennedy, in M.W. Sandler (ed.) *The Letters of John F. Kennedy*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2013), 324.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 325.

⁸⁹ J.F. Kennedy, Letter dated 6 March 1963 to Bobbie Lou Pendergrass, in M.W. Sandler (ed.) *The Letters of John F. Kennedy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2013), 325.

⁹⁰ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 86.

⁹¹ M.W. Sandler (ed.), *The Letters of John F. Kennedy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2013), 233.

On November 22 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Jacqueline Kennedy wrote to Nikita Khrushchev before leaving the White House: “He used to quote your words in some of his speeches – ‘In the next war the survivors will envy the dead.’”⁹² She added: “The danger which troubled my husband was that war might be started not so much by the big men as by the little ones. While the big men know the needs for self-control and restraint – little men are sometimes moved by fear and pride. If only in the future the big men can continue to make the little ones sit down and talk, before they start to fight.”⁹³

President J. F. Kennedy served as a reluctant warrior and as an advocate of diplomacy; his legacy to the US people was Executive Order 10924, in 1961, which officially created the United States of America’s Peace Corps.

Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969)

The reputation of President Lyndon B. Johnson has been overshadowed by the ghosts of the Vietnam War and his strengths have been largely unrecognised. At first glance, a review of his presidency does not adhere to presenting a period in US history where USCA was a contributing consideration to the decision-making process. Yet, casualty aversion was a significant factor in Johnson’s administration; it has simply gone unnoticed. As mentioned above, the events on the ground in South Vietnam, prior to President J.F. Kennedy’s assassination, were escalating and the United States was reluctantly moving in the direction of military intervention. The Johnson administration advocated that their priorities for Vietnam were the containment of communism and the credibility of the United States. Later in the administration, Dean Rusk argued that the “integrity of the U.S. commitment is the principal pillar of peace throughout the world. If that commitment becomes unreliable, the communist world would draw conclusions that would lead to our ruin and almost certainly to a catastrophic war.”⁹⁴

The US policy for Vietnam was to try to “walk a fine line between doing too little and doing too much. It would have been difficult to walk that line even without the threat of nuclear escalation, but that threat put further pressure on the need for precise measures.”⁹⁵ Vietnam could not escalate into a world war because the Soviet Union didn’t have weapons capable of attacking mainland

⁹² Jacqueline Kennedy, Letter dated 1 December 1963 to Nikita Khrushchev, in M.W. Sandler (ed.), *The Letters of John F. Kennedy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2013), 351.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁹⁴ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 12.

⁹⁵ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 135.

America and its citizens. Following controversial incidents with the US destroyer U.S.N. Maddox and the U.S.N. Turner Joy in August 1964, President L.B. Johnson suggested that significant retaliation was justified, and subsequently committed to US military intervention in Vietnam. Johnson stated: "We will do what must be done. And we will do only what must be done."⁹⁶ Later, Robert McNamara wrote that this decision "ultimately destroyed his presidency and polarized America like nothing since the Civil War."⁹⁷

All of President Johnson's '*four wise men*' (Clark Clifford, Arthur Dean, Allen Dulles and John McCloy) agreed:

- To increase US troop numbers being sent to Vietnam.
- Implement Operation Rolling Thunder (1965-68) as a necessity to halt the use of the supply routes which were not easily accessible from the ground.

Operation Rolling Thunder was plagued with ambiguity, faulty assumptions and was the subject of controversy due to its *modus operandi*: "if it can be seen, it can be hit; if it can be hit, it can be killed."⁹⁸ Robert McNamara warned President Johnson against the approach:

There's a limit beyond which many Americans and much of the world will not permit the United States to go. The picture of the world's greatest superpower killing or seriously injuring 1000 [non-combatants] a week, while trying to pound a tiny backward nation into submission on an issue whose merits are hotly disputed, is not a pretty one.⁹⁹

The central strategic justification for Operation Rolling Thunder was USCA; aerial bombardment allowed the United States to reduce the number of troops in ground positions, which in theory would lower their body count. The body count was already an established indicator for operational and mission success prior to Vietnam, though during this time its profile was raised within US society. Referred to as being Robert McNamara's obsession whilst working at the DOD, a more accurate account would be that during this period the body count became the national litmus test for US success in Vietnam, especially at the DOD.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 135.

⁹⁷ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 170.

⁹⁸ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 143.

⁹⁹ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 269.

General Colin L. Powell recalled from his experiences in Vietnam that it was “the military’s obsession.”¹⁰⁰ The monitoring of the body count appealed to McNamara’s analytical mind, and in his autobiography, he wrote that he believed “things you can count you ought to count,”¹⁰¹ and this included the loss of life. McNamara later explained he had used the body count “as a measurement to help us figure out what we should be doing in Vietnam to win the war while putting our troops at the least risk.”¹⁰²

The body count system was flawed. Powell described his experiences on the frontline in Vietnam counting bodies as “a macabre statistical competition.”¹⁰³ It was also observed by the frontline infantry officer that an additional flaw of counting US and the enemy bodies was that “the Viet Cong and North Vietnam had all the bodies needed to fling into this conflict and the will to do so. The North simply started sending in its regular army units to counter the losses.”¹⁰⁴ The US military was fighting “against an enemy who believed in his cause and was willing to pay the price, however high.”¹⁰⁵ Powell concluded on these matters that “it was real, and it was ugly,”¹⁰⁶ and as a US advisor he became a “referee in a grisly game, and a VC KIA required a VC body. No body, no credit.”¹⁰⁷ In a similar vein, Powell asserted his concerns that “readiness and training reports in the Vietnam era were routinely inflated to please and conceal rather than to evaluate and correct... the powers seemed to believe that by manipulating words, we could change the truth. We had lost touch with reality.”¹⁰⁸ An example being: “Consider an expression like KHA, killed by hostile action. It removed some of the sting of the stark, more familiar KIA – killed in action – as though we did not want to upset folks back home by what really happened in those rice paddies. The distinction was so meaningless that only self-deluding bureaucrats could detect it, and certainly not the poor KHAs.”¹⁰⁹

An important implementation of casualty aversion which has been misunderstood and is often regarded as a failure of US intervention in Vietnam, is the number of US military personnel assigned. General William C. Westmoreland “blamed the ‘ill-considered’ policy of ‘graduated response,’

¹⁰⁰ Powell, *My American Journey*, 146.

¹⁰¹ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 238.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 238.

¹⁰³ Powell, *My American Journey*, 146.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

arguing that had the United States employed its military power quickly and decisively, the war could have been won without provoking the domestic backlash.”¹¹⁰ James Schlesinger, the Secretary of Defense 1973-1975, also agreed that “the military had operated with too many restrictions.”¹¹¹

Paul Nitze claimed that Robert McNamara was “tormented by the number of people who had died carrying out his orders, [and] was beginning a slow-motion nervous breakdown.”¹¹² McNamara admitted “My sense of the war gradually shifted from concern to scepticism to frustration to anguish. It shifted not because of growing fatigue, as sometimes alleged, but because of my increasing anxiety that more and more people were being killed and we simply were not accomplishing our goals.”¹¹³

The request for an escalation of US troop numbers by Westmoreland, 200,000 additional troops, triggered McNamara’s belief that their policy in Vietnam was failing and other methods should be considered. After visiting Vietnam in 1965 Paul Nitze was also convinced that additional troops would not nearly do the job and on being asked if the US should withdraw by McNamara, Nitze said ‘yes.’¹¹⁴ On May 19, 1967, McNamara issued a memo to President L.B. Johnson, which stated that “it was time to change our objectives in Vietnam and the means by which we sought to achieve them. The memo foreshadowed the break between us over Vietnam that ultimately led to my departure.”¹¹⁵ In February, 1968 Robert McNamara left the DOD, later acknowledging his ‘share of the burden’ especially “consenting to fight a guerrilla war with conventional military tactics against a foe willing to absorb enormous casualties in a country without the fundamental political stability necessary to conduct effective military and pacification operations. It could not be done, and it was not done.”¹¹⁶

A graduated response was unintentionally imposed by US political elites, ‘mission creep’ came from implementing a strategy and tactics which were insufficient to undermine the will of the opposition and as McNamara highlighted, that the US strategy in Vietnam was based on assumptions which “were deeply flawed.”¹¹⁷ It was not the war the US wished to fight, or the war its troops trained for

¹¹⁰ Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 267.

¹¹¹ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 141.

¹¹² Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 199.

¹¹³ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 207.

¹¹⁴ Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 201.

¹¹⁵ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 234.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

it. The US advisory role required a low troop footprint on the ground which provided a commitment from the US without placing US troops in unnecessary danger and becoming embroiled in direct warfare. From the beginning, US troop numbers were limited in order to keep the US body count low. Simplistically, this was innate casualty aversion being implemented from the outset. As the situation on the ground deteriorated US troops became directly embroiled in combat, which resulted in US military deaths. To ensure success, on several occasions the military requested significant increases on ground troop numbers. Each increment request was met reluctantly and was deemed too high; thus, the cycle of graduated response became a countermeasure.

These assurances have since been interpreted as broken promises. Gradual increases in troop numbers were obtained through the use of the draft, which had both political and strategic implications. Despite the effort to keep the draft fair, loopholes were established and used by certain sectors of US society. From a tactical and strategic perspective, those who were drafted despite their best efforts to avoid it, lacked training, were inexperienced, and were unable to outpace the North Vietnamese on their terrain. The irony which surrounds the graduated response was that it was imposed by political elites who were concerned with not becoming too deeply embroiled; however, these restrictions did not allow the military to implement a full-scale US response which may have prevented the lengthy conflict and in the long run reduced the numbers of US casualties.

In April 1975, the US withdrew all the US citizens from Vietnam. Collectively, US society agreed to “No more Vietnams”¹¹⁸ in the future of their nation's foreign policy. The Vietnam War solidified USCA into US society. This part of the study examines why it gained such prominence during this critical juncture of US history.

By 1975, the national mood in the United States was one of disaffection. The sociologist Daniel Bell declared that exceptionalism had “vanished with the end of empire, the weakening of power, the loss of faith in the nation’s future in light of both Vietnam and Watergate.”¹¹⁹ Thomas M. Kane reiterated that “the American public’s growing disaffection with its government increased social friction at home, undermined citizen’s confidence in their national principles, encouraged the powerful to violate those principles yet further, complicated the task of national leadership and

¹¹⁸ B. Balogh, ‘From metaphor to quagmire: the domestic legacy of the Vietnam War.’ In C. E. Neu, ed, *After Vietnam: Legacies of a Lost War*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 30.

¹¹⁹ A. Priest, ‘From Saigon to Baghdad’, 149.

deprived the republic of talents of innumerable bright, principled and enthusiastic people who felt that their idealism was incompatible with their Americanism. All this took place at an unfortunate moment in the country's history.

The 1970s were a "dangerous time for US citizens to lose faith in their republic."¹²⁰ Isaacs described the cultural effect of the Vietnam War: "Like a magnet, which draws steel shavings scattered on a sheet of paper into a particular form and pattern, Vietnam gave visible shape to the great cultural changes sweeping over American society, defining more than any other event, the era and its pains."¹²¹ The Vietnam War became "the era's most powerful symbol of damaged ideals and the loss of trust, unity, shared myths, and common values."¹²² Isaacs claimed that "quite literally, the word Vietnam ceased to mean a real country on the far side of the Pacific Ocean with its own history and traditions and circumstances and became instead... another word for mistakes or dishonesty."¹²³

Brian Balogh asserted that Vietnam became a metaphor for the turmoil and decline of US society. Brigham claimed that there was a "mood of despair in the United States. No one wanted to talk about the war, and political leaders did not want to repeat it."¹²⁴ Charles. E Neu observed its ending "brought a loss of American innocence or an end of American exceptionalism."¹²⁵ There was the issue of political credibility. Even Congress was concerned as both "Johnson and Nixon bequeathed to their successors the potential of the 'credibility gap': a tipping point when domestic political support for the President drains away as public opinion recognises a disjunction between his perception of the efficacy of his actions as Commander in Chief and their interpretation of the reality of war."¹²⁶

As a consequence, the Vietnam War became a socially taboo topic and in sectors of US society it no longer felt like a perfect union, as its principles had been challenged. Although these accounts provided a cohesive representation, caution should be taken to not over-emphasise this perspective. As Thomas M. Kane rightly noted: "as a matter of historical accuracy, it is possible to overrate Vietnam's role in the trend towards cynicism, anti-militarism and political alienation in

¹²⁰ Kane, *Theoretical Roots of US Foreign Policy*, 109.

¹²¹ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 6.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹²⁴ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 139.

¹²⁵ C. E. Neu, *After Vietnam*, xiii.

¹²⁶ J. Roper, 'Europe's Vietnam Syndrome', 147.

American culture,"¹²⁷ because previous military interventions, for example World War One and Korea "aroused well-justified disillusionment as well."¹²⁸ Kane added: "The youthful exuberance of the baby boom generation and the general development of modern society would probably have weakened American national unity in any event. Nevertheless, the Vietnam experience dramatically accelerated this trend."¹²⁹

When US society and culture became aware of its own aversion to US casualties during wartime, this was not a catastrophic cultural change due to its embedded nature. It was influenced by ideologically-related cultural shifts within US society, examples include: the civil rights movement, denuclearization (CND), and the empowerment of women agenda; all being brought about by the youthful voices of US Americans, which created and compounded a sense of change within American society. This was further enhanced by events which echoed across the Western democracies, a noted example being the marches of 1968, which represented a proactive and youthful generation redefining themselves. The youth outrage towards the government and military in relation to the Vietnam War maintained as these youthful voices eventually became elite citizens in influential positions within US society, taking with them their experiences and prolonging the longevity of Vietnam's cultural impact, its analogies and metaphors which had formed its narrative. Along with this, the subtleness which surrounded USCA drifted away through an overt process of review and renewal; and although in the immediate aftermath of withdrawal there was little reflection there was as Benjamin Buley called the "period of introspection."¹³⁰

There still remains a perception that the Vietnam War created an internal division within US society, a division which was symbolised by the Hawks and Doves. The Hawks aligned their thinking and voiced their opinions in support of military action to halt the spread of communism and overtly supported troop increases. The Doves viewed the conflict as a senseless waste of young American lives and that because "lives were being wasted in a never-ending and pointless endeavour," and it was "vital to the long-term erosion of public support."¹³¹ Elements of this narrative do represent US society during this time and remain relevant, however, as shown - the development of intricate scholarly literature rejuvenated these cultural assumptions.

¹²⁷ Kane, *Theoretical Roots of US Foreign Policy*, 109

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 109

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 109

¹³⁰ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 62.

¹³¹ C.D. Walton, Vietnam: Avoidable Tragedy or Prudent Endeavor? *Comparative Strategy*, 19 (2000), 358.

The polarisation of US society into the Hawks and Doves is clearly more complex than briefly illustrated above and in the literature review.

Patrick Hagopian asserted that:

- The Vietnam War “divided US society into several factions, each antagonistic to the others.”
- “Many Americans were prepared to ‘stay the course’ with the policies of the Johnson and Nixon administrations.”
- The anti-war movement organised demonstrations against the war.
- The Doves in Congress wanted the United States to extricate itself from Vietnam more quickly than the president’s policies intended, and public support for this position gradually increased.
- The Hawks wanted the United States to use decisive action - a massive bombing campaign or an invasion of North Vietnam to achieve a swift victory.¹³²

An overlooked yet persistent link between the internal issues and the military intervention in Vietnam gravitated around USCA. The combination of the rising rates of US soldiers being killed in action along with the draft being implemented, while the media sought out the truth on the ground and presented the horrors of war, did not corroborate the official statements. The US people questioned the intervention and in certain elements of the society, it fostered further distrust towards the government.

In summary, for the United States the Vietnam War was a humiliating defeat, though as Gray noted “it is all but inevitable that [a] country will occasionally suffer”¹³³ and they “stayed the course with remarkable and admirable fortitude.”¹³⁴

- The US experience was worthy of a review as a case study because not only did it highlight, it also exacerbated the first significant realisation in US society of its aversion to its own casualties.
- The Vietnam War provided US society with its first formal naming of USCA, Vietnam Syndrome, which has endured.

¹³² P. Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing*, (University of Massachusetts Press. 2009), 25-26.

¹³³ Gray, *The Sheriff*, 140-141.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 140-141.

- As demonstrated, an examination of a variety of elite documents shows considerations relating to USCA present in the decision-making process and its implicit implementation during both military operations in Korea and Vietnam.
- USCA was not a consequence of the Vietnam War and if the war were erased from US history, USCA would remain within US culture, society and its strategic culture.
- Prior to the conclusion of the Vietnam War, implementations of USCA were predominantly implicit and subtle.
- From this point in time, USCA was (with varying degrees) overtly implemented by elite US Americans.

The extensive research of George C. Herring considered that the abrupt ending to the war had “a devastating effect on officers throughout the military establishment. ‘I grieved as though I had lost a member of my family,’ a senior officer later recalled, and the harsh reality of failure and defeat left many officers angry and embittered.”¹³⁵ This sentiment was also observed by R. D. Schulzinger: “Nowhere did the memories of the Vietnam War have greater practical impact than in the US military, where many senior officers believed that the country had let them down. They believed they had fought well, never lost a battle, but had been abandoned by elected officials and spurned by many civilians.”¹³⁶ US citizens who had given service to their country in Vietnam felt betrayed by their society, this resentment tended to be focused on the politics and media. They resented how unfairly they and their comrades had been represented by a hostile media and how injured veterans of the war were treated on their return. Within the ranks of the military’s officers, there was such anger felt that many resigned from the military at the first opportunity. For veterans of the Vietnam War there is still resentment due to the unfair treatment of returning soldiers and especially those who were injured in action.

Since 1971, John Kerry (US Secretary of State, 2013-2017, and former Naval Officer, serving two tours in Vietnam) has been a committed national spokesman for military veterans. Reflecting on his experiences of the Vietnam War in an interview with Ken Burns in 2016, Kerry outlined his thoughts on the lasting legacy of the Vietnam War on the military and its veterans. He argued that when we talk about the Vietnam War, lesson one should be: “Whether a war is popular or unpopular, or it’s not even what we call a war but a conflict, we must always – always – treat our returning vets with

¹³⁵ Herring, ‘Preparing not to refight the last war’, 56-84: 62.

¹³⁶ R. D. Schulzinger, *A Time of Peace: The Legacy of the Vietnam War*, (New York: Oxford University Press. 2006), 189.

the dignity and the respect that they have earned by virtue of their service to our nation.”¹³⁷ He asserted his belief regarding elements of US society following the Vietnam War: “The confusion that some Americans showed in blaming the warriors for the war itself was tragically misplaced... our veterans did not receive either the welcome home nor the benefits nor the treatment that they not only deserved, but needed, and the fundamental contract between soldier and government simply was not honored.”¹³⁸ Kerry added that the clearest lesson should be: “Don’t ever confuse the war with the warriors, particularly in a volunteer status where people are serving their country and trying to keep all of us safe and responding to the requests of leaders who are supposed to get it right.”¹³⁹ A lesson which is still pertinent today for US society. The irony of USCA is that in the theatre of war, the United States endeavours to protect its troops. Yet when those troops return, they are not always treated with respect, and for the veterans who are injured, their care and support could significantly be improved.

For the remaining senior military officers there were few who looked back at their “own performance in Vietnam or consider that the military leadership might have made any mistakes except in failing to resist civilian meddling.”¹⁴⁰ The majority held the view that “although painful, Vietnam had been an aberration without lasting relevance, like an illness that had run its course and now needed only to be forgotten as quickly as possible.”¹⁴¹ The military’s senior officers “post-war amnesia”¹⁴² demonstrated that their job as military professionals was complete and it was “the ultimate defeat of national policy, caused by factors beyond their control, was not their responsibility or concern.”¹⁴³ Those in the senior ranks “recognized that even the vast power of the United States had limits”¹⁴⁴ and returned their thoughts back to the Cold War and the protection of Europe.

During the United States' military withdrawal from Vietnam, a survey was conducted by the Army War College. Colin Powell’s opinion was that the ‘*Carlisle*’ survey’s results were “dynamite” because of the 450 Lieutenant Colonels, nearly all of whom had served in Vietnam “blasted the Army for not

¹³⁷ J. Kerry, Conversation with Ken Burns, 01/05/2016.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows the War*, 69.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 69-70.

¹⁴² Ibid., 70.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 70.

¹⁴⁴ Herring, ‘Preparing not to refight the last war’, 56-84: 62.

facing its failures. The most devastating attack was on the integrity of the senior leadership.”¹⁴⁵ The authors of the report attempted to find external flaws, however the US Army had to admit it “had created its own mess,” and recommended that “change therefore, must be instituted from the top of the Army;”¹⁴⁶ and by the late 1970s a select group of military officers and scholars had begun to reflect on the US experience in Vietnam, and implement a process of military renewal.

The US military across all of its services required all of its officers to study military history and strategy, with an emphasis on Clausewitz. New courses were introduced at both the Army War College and Air War College. Colin Powell attended the National War College (NWC) in 1975 and noted that discussions about Vietnam were “soul searching – the what-went-wrong syndrome – created a lively ferment.”¹⁴⁷ This was supplemented with the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth and the Navy’s Strategic Studies Group in Newport. All these institutions undertook research which contributed to a re-writing of the ‘war-fighting’ doctrines. The new courses and research provoked reflection and debate especially on the Vietnam War and how its lessons should be carried forward. Unsurprisingly, the consensus was that the United States’ military should not be drawn into a war like Vietnam again with the consistent mantra being ‘never again.’

Colin Powell completed two tours in Vietnam and he later reflected about his personal experiences there and the effects on his military career. There are several insightful passages in his autobiography which should be highlighted about this period in his life, as they would come to shape his decisions later in his career. On his return to the United States from Vietnam, Powell became a military instructor: “my most important classes involved officer candidates, young men, in their early twenties who would be shipping out to Vietnam as new infantry second lieutenants, where they would suffer the highest casualties among officers. A fair percentage of those eager faces in my classes were not coming back, I knew, no matter what I taught them.”¹⁴⁸

Powell endeavoured to provide them with the best training he could. Living in an infantry hometown, Columbus, where thousands of military families lived also emphasised the personal impact of the war on US families, especially the infantry. Powell wrote that “when a yellow cab pulled up to a house and the driver got out, you knew he was delivering a telegram from the Defense

¹⁴⁵ Powell, *My American Journey*, 155.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 117.

Department and Benning had another widow and a new family of fatherless children.”¹⁴⁹ Powell stated that it was “unintentionally brutal, and as casualties mounted, the services devised a more compassionate way to deliver the grim news.”¹⁵⁰ It is often overlooked in the US narrative that the casualty notification officers “drew the hardest job in the military, to go to the families of the fallen, to deliver the word, to comfort them, and to offer whatever help they could.”¹⁵¹

The military recognised that its relationship with the US populace had declined throughout the Vietnam War. Powell wrote: “I disliked watching Americans demonstrating against Americans in wartime... Politicians start wars; soldiers fight and die in them. We do not have the luxury of waiting for a better war;”¹⁵² adding that “I was willing to do my duty. But as far as the rest of the country were concerned, we were doing it alone.”¹⁵³ This relationship needed to be re-established. For military elites, the “American people constitute[d] the essential domino in the process of taking the nation to war.”¹⁵⁴ No significant use of military force could succeed without the US people’s support. Herring drew attention to the distrust the military elites still had during the 1980s for civilian leadership, believing them to have “poorly understood the uses of military power and were responsive to all sorts of political pressures that had little to do with “objective conditions of the battlefield.”¹⁵⁵ The consequence of this distrust and scepticism was the perception that the military had become reluctant to deploy for military operations: “No-where in American society was there greater reluctance to employ force than in the military itself, a clear result of what had come to be called the ‘Vietnam syndrome.’”¹⁵⁶ This however, should be viewed as the military acknowledging the importance of the ethos they placed on those who served. The military of the United States was overtly declaring that military personnel would never again become fatal casualties on military adventures which were not deemed essential to maintaining national security. USCA was now being overtly advocated within the military despite its roots being embedded in US history and its strategic culture long before US troops set foot in Vietnam.

Simultaneously, a wider conversation about the Vietnam War and its legacy developed amongst US citizens: the Vietnam War had induced an awakening in US society of a deeper understanding and

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 119.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 119.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 119.

¹⁵² Ibid., 123.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 129.

¹⁵⁴ Campbell, ‘Once Burned, Twice Cautious’, 363.

¹⁵⁵ Herring, ‘Preparing not to refight the last war’, 56-84: 73.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 56-84: 73.

an awareness of their casualty aversion. Education has consistently been an important element in the individual's socialisation; consequently, the US educational system formed a significant part of the process in which the history of the Vietnam War was institutionalised and remembered. Unfortunately, there were inconsistencies in its teaching, which hindered understanding for the generations which followed, and reinforced a legacy and analogies associated with the war.

Previous research found that in some cases the Vietnam War was not being taught in US history classes; this and other inconsistencies in the teaching of the history of the Vietnam War contributed to inaccurate and mis-informed views about the war. This was not solely the fault of the education systems, as there was a significant lack of official evaluation and "many unresolved questions of fact and interpretation continued to confound teachers and students alike."¹⁵⁷ Rather than examining what actually happened in Vietnam "many instructors took the easier route of teaching what amounted to courses in 1960s nostalgia, inviting veterans and war protesters to share their reminiscences with students."¹⁵⁸ Students learnt about the "experience of American soldiers, or about the American experience of frustration, disillusion, and moral confusion. But they learned almost nothing about why the war started, or about the opposing Vietnamese sides or about the events that gave the conflict its shape before the United States became involved."¹⁵⁹

This unsatisfactory curriculum ultimately led to the following generations forming superficial opinions and interpretations of the truth. Ronald H. Spector noted that "the facts were in chronic danger of being smothered by emotion and partisan mythology, more courses didn't necessarily mean more true understanding or knowledge of the war."¹⁶⁰ It was apparent that even in 2009 the US state education system was reinforcing a mysticism of the war through the inaccuracy of its teaching. Conversations with US graduates from a variety of backgrounds admitted they did not understand the complexities of the war, as it had not been taught with the required understanding and detail required. A lack of a coherent understanding of the US experience combined with ill-informed curriculum in the education system and Hollywood entertainment, gained the mythology of the Vietnam War prominence, even though the narrative was incomplete and not fully understood.

¹⁵⁷ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows the War*, 139.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 142-143.

The literature associated with the Vietnam Syndrome capitalised on these lessons and potentially created a shadow that lingered longer than required. For policy makers, they too choose not to forget or repeat the lessons of Vietnam. Congress sought to increase their role in the decision-making process with the President on matters which required military intervention. In 1996 Robert McNamara asked: “My associates in the Kennedy and Johnson administration were an exceptional group: young, vigorous, intelligent, well-meaning, patriotic servants of the United States. How did this group – ‘the best and the brightest,’ as we eventually came to be known in an ironically pejorative phrase – get it wrong in Vietnam?”¹⁶¹

A correct appraisal of the Vietnam War should be that no one individual can be held responsible for what went wrong. The reason being that no sole US citizen sent their fellow citizens to Vietnam; it was a collaborative process. C.D. Walton supported this view in his assessment: “It would be unfair to single out Westmoreland for blame for US defeat in Vietnam – certainly, Johnson, Kennedy, and McNamara bear a much greater responsibility, because they made the political decisions that set the operational parameters within which Westmoreland was forced to operate.”¹⁶² Walton added that “the decisions made by the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations all made errors in their Vietnam policy, and some of the errors of the former two were grievous, but they were mistakes made for rational reasons and generally in good faith.”¹⁶³

The importance of understanding the enemy is one lesson that nearly all who have assessed the US conduct in relation to the Vietnam experience have highlighted. Paul Warnke reflected: “The trouble with our policy in Vietnam has been that we guessed wrong with respect to what North Vietnam would be. We anticipated that they would react *like reasonable people*.”¹⁶⁴ US assessments of the casualty figures failed to take into account that the North Vietnamese were fighting for a nationalistic cause which they truly believed in, and as a consequence they were willing to sacrifice their troops. Buley noted that “it only belatedly occurred to those wedded to the assumption of the enemy ‘rationality’ that the North Vietnamese might have a completely different casualty tolerance to the Americans.”¹⁶⁵ For McNamara the most important lesson that should have been learnt in Vietnam was: “It became clear then, and I believe it is clear today, that military force - especially when wielded by an outside power – just cannot bring order in a country that cannot govern

¹⁶¹ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, xix.

¹⁶² Walton, *The Myth of Inevitable US Defeat in Vietnam*, 53.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁶⁴ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 61.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

itself.”¹⁶⁶ Herring stated that the United States' assessment of “Vietnam seems to have been well off the mark.”¹⁶⁷

For John Kerry, “there were mistakes in leadership, mistakes in communication, mistakes in strategy. There were huge mistakes in the basic assumptions about the war.”¹⁶⁸ A lack of understanding of the North Vietnamese inevitably led to an unworkable strategy for the United States as a consequence the Vietnam War was not the war that the US military planners had intended to fight and the strategy was inappropriate. Herring argued that “the United States never developed a strategy appropriate for the war it was fighting, in part because it was assumed that the mere application of its vast military power would be sufficient.”¹⁶⁹ Planners at the Pentagon found themselves fighting a guerrilla war and their capabilities were not suitable for this type of conflict. Despite several attempts to maintain a strategy based around technological superiority, it was redundant against the North Vietnamese. In addition, guerrilla warfare was too costly on military personnel and the US casualty count the US strategy inflicted significant civilian casualty numbers leading to resentment within the population.

With the elections of new presidents and new international crises arising, the issue of the Vietnam War would begin to surface and presidents often “explicitly presented their foreign policies as contrasts to the failures and disappointments in Vietnam. The pattern of seeing current foreign and military affairs through the lens of Vietnam began almost immediately after the war’s end.”¹⁷⁰ President Gerald Ford in his re-election campaign in 1977 acknowledged that “we were still deeply involved in the problems of Vietnam; but now we are at peace. Not a single young American is fighting or dying on any foreign soil.”¹⁷¹ Those politically aligned to the Republican Party argued, if the United States was going to engage in future conflicts, it must not fight unless it was determined to win.

¹⁶⁶ R.S. McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 261.

¹⁶⁷ Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 13.

¹⁶⁸ J. Kerry, Conversation with Ken Burns, 01/05/2016.

¹⁶⁹ Herring, *America’s Longest War*, 146.

¹⁷⁰ Schulzinger, *A Time or Peace*, 184.

¹⁷¹ Mueller, ‘Vietnam and Iraq’, 184.

Chapter 6: Reluctant Warriors: Overt Implementations of USCA

Throughout US history each generation of political analysts, political elites and scholars have represented USCA in various forms and with multiple names, depending on the context of their times. The most notable example of this is Vietnam Syndrome. Scholars and mainstream commentators have observed that even after events such as the Gulf War and the September 11 terrorist attacks, when USCA appears to have been suppressed, it has always returned.

The following chapter provides a detailed examination of work undertaken by several elite citizens, for example Casper Weinberger, Colin Powell and President Jimmy Carter. This is to provide examples of how USCA was advocated, implemented and embedded into US strategic culture through the socialisation of its elite citizens in the polity and military. In addition, the case study, *'Adrift'* reviews two critically important historical junctures for the United States and its people; the conclusion of the Cold War and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. These are presented alongside observations of US military engagement, which demonstrate a perpetual oscillation between military intervention and isolation until the end point of the thesis time frame (2017).

Both the Presidential administrations of Carter and Reagan conducted their foreign policy with a "generalised sense of caution."¹ Military force was authorised by President R. Reagan in both Grenada and Panama, however both operations were conducted briefly and decisively to ensure victory and that there was no unnecessary loss of US lives. In contrast to other regional conflicts in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, the decision was taken to maintain US interests by using proxies, as it was considered that these operations would be high risk, with escalation probably leading to the loss of a high number of US lives.

Principally, President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981) respected the importance of the US citizen and preservation of life and these principles had been embedded during his childhood and whilst serving in the United States Navy. He wrote in one of his autobiographies: "My life has been shaped inevitably by the experiences and decisions of my forefathers and I have learned a lot about my family history."² His primary socialisation (childhood) was certainly influenced and informed by his participation in family life, religion and community in the South, for example, his great-grandfather

¹ Dumbrell & Ryan, *Vietnam in Iraq*, 5.

² J. Carter, *A Full Life*, 3.

Littleberry Walker Carter had served as an artilleryman in the Confederate army and his mother, who quietly challenged the status quo during the economic depression years.

Miss Julia Coleman, his former school teacher reinforced the message: “You must accommodate changing times but cling to unchanging principles.”³ This quote remained with Carter and he repeatedly used it in his speeches, notably at his inauguration and when he received the Nobel Peace Prize. Despite money being scarce both his parents insisted on his finishing high school and were determined that he would attend college, since “there were two notable universities in America where tuition and board were free: West Point and Annapolis.”⁴ In July, 1943 he entered the United States Navy to attend its Naval Academy, Annapolis. By studying naval engineering until graduating in June 1946, Carter learnt the “rudiments of electrical power, electronics, mechanical design, seamanship, and the construction and operation of ships and the equipment and armaments on them.”⁵ Carter was “grateful to the Academy and have always appreciated the value of my education and introduction to military discipline.”⁶ Serving in the Navy gave him a greater awareness and appreciation of life: “I realized how fragile was my existence, and how fallible were even the most dedicated and experienced seamen.”⁷ All these experiences remained with him and influenced his choices in later years especially when at the White House.

Politically, Carter had remained impartial during his military service though admired Senator Hubert Humphrey from afar, who he had watched “lead the 1948 Democratic Convention fight over civil rights,”⁸ and later nominated as the Democratic candidate in opposition to Richard Nixon. Humphrey chose not to “criticize or disavow responsibility for any of the decisions that had been made concerning the war. This cost him votes among Democrats on the left”⁹ and ultimately, lost him the election. Later, the two men formed a bond, with Humphrey providing helpful advice on matters “concerning how best to approach other senators when [he] faced sensitive issues.”¹⁰

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter entered the White House with the intention of implementing a cautious foreign policy. Though this intention was largely in response to the unsuccessful outcome

³ Ibid., 96-97.

⁴ Ibid., 30.

⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁷ Ibid., 53.

⁸ Ibid., 162.

⁹ Ibid., 162.

¹⁰ Ibid., 163.

of the Vietnam War, this was not the sole factor. Carter's election campaign promises were a commitment to make radical cuts to military spending and to strengthen US diplomacy, and to achieve these, the administration significantly cut military spending, reduced overseas military operations, appraised US arms trade, and advocated an agenda of international human rights. It is worth noting that although the military was subject to substantial spending cuts, procurement funding was specifically allocated for expenditure to support "technological improvements in weaponry, including precision bombs, cruise missiles, nuclear ship propulsion, and stealth aircraft."¹¹

Caution, reluctance and USCA were candidly discussed and administered by President Carter and his administration. As President, he addressed matters relating to foreign policy pragmatically and considerately; he was neither a Hawk nor a Dove; though certainly understood the power of diplomacy and attempted to seek diplomatic resolutions rather than responding with military force. To establish a cohesive message from the White House and across his administration, Carter devised a weekly breakfast each Friday, when his schedule allowed, with his National Security Team. It was important to President Carter that issues were addressed in a diplomatic way, and this meeting went some way to reassuring this happened. He was also proud of this accomplishment: "This is an inevitable challenge for American leaders, because there are influential people in every department who want to shape policy that affects the rest of the world, and sometimes this desired unity is not achieved."¹²

Critics have sometimes inferred that during the Carter presidency, the United States' foreign policy was delivered with "rhetoric of atonement,"¹³ and faced a "crisis in confidence,"¹⁴ while also being described as uncertain, paralysed, adrift and lacking in confidence. It is understandable why these criticisms were levied against Carter and his foreign policies, as a general overview of the Carter years could easily lead to this negative consideration. A detailed re-examination of the four years in which President Carter held the office offers a different account; one which demonstrates consistency in his foreign policy decisions.

It was inevitable that the Carter administration would have to address the immediate legacy of the Vietnam War and the national mood; this was reflected in both its election promises, legislation and

¹¹ Ibid., 149.

¹² Ibid., 175.

¹³ Schulzinger, *A Time of Peace*, 185.

¹⁴ Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory*, 35.

restraint during the crisis. Carter, however, did not see his presidency being one to heal the nation and he referred to President Ford as the healing president in matters linked to the Vietnam War and Watergate. Whilst campaigning for the office of president he wrote: "It soon became obvious that there was a serious distrust of top political leaders in Washington,"¹⁵ and that, "one of the earliest and most persistent questions was: 'If elected, will you tell us the truth?'"¹⁶ In order to gain US Americans' trust in the office he would close with: "If I ever lie or even make a misleading statement, don't vote for me."¹⁷

Carter did not, nor could he, ignore the consequences of the Vietnam War on both domestic and international issues. Having had a son who had volunteered for military service in Vietnam, President Carter commented: "When he returned home on leave as an enlisted man, he was ridiculed by his friends and college classmates for being foolish and naïve, and chose not to wear his uniform."¹⁸ Additionally, within Carter's executive there were key advisors, for example Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State (1977-1980), who Carter felt "closest on policy toward peace and human rights."¹⁹ Vance had been a prominent supporter of the Vietnam War whilst working in the administrations of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and he was not averse to military intervention. However, Vance was later described as a man chastened by the human costs of the Vietnam War who wanted to avoid military interventions abroad."²⁰ Vance acknowledged the mistakes he had made in his contribution to the Vietnam War and considered himself to be a man of principle and having given a speech in May 1979, that Carter's US foreign policy was to project a "conciliatory approach"²¹ and reaffirmed the principle that "the use of military force is not, and should not, be a desirable American policy response to internal politics of other nations."²²

Carter advocated that the principal lesson of the Vietnam War was that the United States "had concentrated too heavily on the Cold War competition with the Soviet Union and Communist revolutionaries. In the process, the United States had neglected even more important issues such as the promotion of human rights and the alleviation of poverty around the world."²³ Additionally,

¹⁵ Carter, *A Full Life*, 112.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 112-113.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁰ Schulzinger, *A Time of Peace*, 186.

²¹ Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory*, 34.

²² *Ibid.*, 34.

²³ Schulzinger, *A Time of Peace*, 185.

Carter recognised that “newly emerging postcolonial nations were in revolt because of grinding poverty, social and racial problems, and political difficulties, not international communism. He wanted to reorient US relations with the developing world, erasing the ‘intellectual and moral poverty’ of military intervention that had been demonstrated in Vietnam.”²⁴ Thus, he decided that at the centre of his foreign policy would be “keeping the peace and strengthening human rights.”²⁵ This approach was initiated by withdrawing support for “doctrinal government simply because it was a loyal anti-communist ally.”²⁶ With an US foreign policy that emphasised diplomacy, human rights, justice and equality; President Carter maintained a level of restraint in the use of military force throughout his one term in office, and engaged in the use of diplomacy during times of international crisis. He acknowledged that the nature of warfare had changed: “We can longer separate the traditional issues of war and peace.”²⁷ This use of restraint was reinforced with the exemplary use of the US State Department.

The Carter administration's responses to the Cambodian issue and to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan were extremely cautious. Despite efforts to maintain a diplomatic response to foreign policy concerns, such as proxy wars and forthright aggression it was not always possible, and was on occasion beyond the administrations control, for example in its ability to respond to Iranian aggression. Ironically, when President Carter believed military action was warranted and could be justified, he was unable to do so because Congress was responding to the mood of the nation.

In Samantha Power's review of genocide and US inaction, she summarised the response from the US foreign policy establishment as “persistently passive”²⁸ on matters relating to Cambodia (1975-1979). The Khmer Rouge had implemented “one of the most reprehensible genocidal programs in history.”²⁹ It is estimated one-third of the Cambodian population were killed. Despite President Carter's advocacy of human rights, it was not until 1978, at the Independent Commission in Oslo, that he publicly denounced the Cambodian government: “America cannot avoid the responsibility to speak out in condemnation of the Cambodian government, the worst violator of human rights in

²⁴ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 143.

²⁵ Carter, *A Full Life*, 118.

²⁶ Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory*, 34.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁸ S. Power, *“A Problem from Hell” America and the Age of Genocide*, 2nd edition (London: Harper Perennial. 2007), 132.

²⁹ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 144.

the world today.”³⁰ Additionally, when the Socialist Republic of Vietnam invaded Cambodia, the United States supported the Khmer Rouge regime as a lesser of the two evils.

It was clear from Power’s research that “no U.S. official owned the issue day in and day out, and no individual or organization convinced U.S. decision makers that the deaths of Cambodians mattered enough to Americans to warrant their attention.”³¹ Power added: “It would have been politically unthinkable to intervene militarily and emotionally, too unpleasant to pay close heed to the horrors unfolding, but it was cost-free to look away.”³² There was a small flourish of news stories within the US press but nothing of substantial volume to encourage outrage within its citizens. Power established that ABC carried one human rights story about Cambodia in 1976 and did not return to the subject for two years. The US media and people were “simply not interested, and in absence of photographs, video images, personal narratives that could grab readers’ or viewers’ attention, or public protests in the United States about the outrages, they were unlikely to become interested.”³³ It was not until April 1978 when the *New York Times* ran an editorial by William Safire, ‘*Silence is Guilt*’³⁴ that the genocide was brought to the US public’s attention.

Within the political establishment, the lone voice which advocated US military action in Cambodia came from the unlikely source of a Democratic senator from South Dakota, George McGovern. McGovern had initiated the passage of the War Powers Act and “his anti-war credentials were unimpeachable.”³⁵ In August 1978, Senator McGovern publicly urged the Carter government to deploy an international military force for a humanitarian intervention in Cambodia, as the events had reached the level of genocide: “Do we sit on the [sidelines] and watch an entire people slaughtered, or do we marshal military forces and move quietly to put an end to it?”³⁶ As Power described within her text, the press were shocked: “How could this dove have become a raving hawk?”³⁷ A *Wall Street Journal* editorial “lambasted McGovern for his, ‘truly mind-boggling’ stance.”³⁸ McGovern did not consider himself to be a pacifist, rather he declared: “I hate needless

³⁰ Power, “A Problem from Hell”, 131.

³¹ Ibid., 90.

³² Ibid., 90.

³³ Ibid., 111.

³⁴ Ibid., 129.

³⁵ Ibid., 132.

³⁶ Ibid., 133.

³⁷ Ibid., 133.

³⁸ Ibid., 133.

and ill-conceived military ventures.”³⁹ He added, however, that the failed US military intervention in Vietnam “does not give us the excuse to do nothing to stop mass murder in another time or place under vastly different circumstances.”⁴⁰ A letter penned by McGovern and signed by eight senators in October 1978 called for “international action to halt the Cambodian genocide.”⁴¹ It “urged the secretary to introduce the issue immediately with the U.N. Secretary Council.”⁴² and criticised the “Carter administration’s lethargy.”⁴³ The US people did not take to the streets to protest and the Carter administration was “able to reduce its policy calculus to pure geopolitics without rousing dissent.”⁴⁴

There is no mention of the genocide in Cambodia in President Carter’s autobiography, *A Full Life*, and in his diary, there is little mention of the genocide in Cambodia during his time at the White House. In addition, at the conclusion of President Carter’s time in the White House, the international convention of human rights remained unsigned by the United States. Correctly, William Korey, the human rights advocate stated: “Carter’s problem was that he had so many other problems.”⁴⁵ The reason for the inaction has been attributed to the ‘never again’ mentality which lingered. John Mueller believed that President Carter avoided discussion on the genocide in Cambodia due to “fears that paying attention might lead to the conclusion that US troops should be sent over to rectify the disaster.”⁴⁶ Power noted that neither President Ford nor President Carter “[were] going to consider sending troops back to Southeast Asia.”⁴⁷ But what was most striking was that US society simply did nothing because it “concluded that nothing at all could be done.”⁴⁸

On November 4, 1979, Iranian revolutionary soldiers entered the US embassy in Tehran taking its staff hostage and keeping them captive for 444 days. The freeing of the US hostages became President Carter’s priority, he described this period at the White House as the “most stressful and unpleasant of my life.”⁴⁹ Prior to November 1979, diplomatic relations with Iran were significantly strained over the Shah’s visit to the United States for surgical treatment and his prolonged stay.

³⁹ Ibid., 135.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 135.

⁴¹ Ibid., 136.

⁴² Ibid., 136.

⁴³ Ibid., 136.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 148.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 156.

⁴⁶ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 145.

⁴⁷ Power, *“A Problem from Hell”*, 123.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁹ Carter, *A Full Life*, 171.

Ayatollah Khomeini issued a demand for the Shah's return to Iran, though the United States did not adhere.

Collectively, the US people were outraged by the events on November 4, 1979, and the treatment of their citizens. Carter pledged to return of all hostages and publicly declared the United States would:

- Not use US military force to return the hostages.
- Not attempt to use US military power to change the political leadership in Iran.
- Not become involved in a civil war between the supporters of the Shah and the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Carter's choice to reaffirm no US military intervention, with reference to the Vietnam War, supports the premise that he was restrained by the Vietnam Syndrome. Robert K. Brigham stated that Vietnam Syndrome "simply underscored Carter's inability to move the nation to a war footing,"⁵⁰ and was a significant hindrance during the hostage crisis. Brigham concluded that "in retrospect, Carter's problem was that he did not want to get involved in another Vietnam-type conflict, but the world held only more of the same."⁵¹ In the context of examining the Vietnam Syndrome and post-Vietnam USCA, these observations are justified and highlight a plausible thesis as to why the Carter administration chose to pursue political and foreign policies which advocated isolation and military restraint. This does not however present the full context of the decision-making process and when re-examined through the prism of USCA there is further clarity in regards to President Carter's rationale and justifications, during this turbulent time. Furthermore, this thesis asserts that, theoretically, Vietnam Syndrome is USCA operating under a different name.

Throughout this crisis, the Carter administration implemented economic sanctions and engaged in tense diplomacy and negotiation; both of which were in-keeping with its strategic culture. However, when these avenues did not lead to the intended goal of releasing the US hostages, reluctantly President Carter, resorted to authorising a covert rescue mission: *Eagle Claw*. Carter struggled to get the full support of his executive, notably Cyrus Vance, the Secretary of State. Vance's reluctance to support Carter's authorisation for *Eagle Claw* led him to resign. Vance stated "that he had

⁵⁰ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 144.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

objected to the rescue attempt because it involved excessive risk of armed conflict and loss of life.”⁵²
The rescue mission Eagle Claw was a failure and reflected badly on President Carter.

In response to the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the United States had adopted a policy of containment and undertook a series of steps instead of officially deploying US troops to Afghanistan, these included:

- Funding and arms support was allocated to the Soviet Union’s regional neighbours.
- Establishing new naval bases in Oman, Kenya, Somalia, and Egypt.
- Deciding within the Carter administration to open formal diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China.
- The Reagan Administration seeking to use proxy combatants for military operations in Afghanistan (an operational implementation when it is deemed not an immediate threat to the United States).

In respect to the presidential sanctioning of covert military and intelligence operations, these were advocated as a panacea to Vietnam Syndrome (USCA), as the nature of these operations did not require large numbers of US troops on the ground: fewer troops, fewer casualties. Additionally, this type of operation reduced the likelihood of military escalation, if the operation was successful. Principally, when these operations were designed, they were being coordinated by those who were influenced by USCA, and despite President Reagan’s rhetoric during his presidential campaign, it was actually President J. Carter’s military-budget increases that paved the way for the Reagan administration “to fight the cold war using new weapons and covert CIA operations.”⁵³

President Carter acknowledged that he had “faced some unanticipated challenges, especially the Iranian revolution, the taking of our hostages, the Iran-Iraq war which caused the price of petroleum and worldwide inflation to skyrocket”⁵⁴ and it was these events along with a perception he had “slash[ed] America’s defenses”⁵⁵ that had dominated the 1980 presidential election. Whilst the final negotiation process was being conducted through Algerian intermediaries, the Shah of Iran died on July 27, 1980. The United States agreed to unfreeze Iranian assets worth eight billion dollars and gave the hostage takers immunity.

⁵² Carter, *A Full Life*, 172.

⁵³ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 146.

⁵⁴ Carter, *A Full Life*, 203.

⁵⁵ R.W. Reagan, ‘Peace: Restoring the Margin of Safety’ [Speech 18 August 1980].

On January 20, 1981, the hostages were released; it was President Ronald Reagan's inauguration day. President Carter later wrote: "One of the happiest moments of my life came just after I was no longer president, when I was informed by my military aide that the plane carrying all our hostages had taken off from Tehran airport."⁵⁶ Though there was no second term, Carter looked back on his White House years with "peace and satisfaction"⁵⁷ because he had done his utmost to keep his promises to the American people: "We told the truth, we obeyed the law, we kept the peace."⁵⁸ He has continued to help secure a peaceful and prosperous world because he continues to believe that the United States "should be known to be opposed to war, dedicated to the resolution of disputes by peaceful means, and, whenever possible, eager to accomplish this goal."⁵⁹

In the decade prior to the end of the Cold War, the United States continued to navigate the international arena with the lingering consequences of the Vietnam War. President R.W. Reagan (1981-1989) had been prepared to accomplish what he wanted but more importantly he had "moved steadily and skilfully to reach his goals."⁶⁰ From the onset, he was "unmistakably clear that actions adverse to freedom, that could harm friends or potential friends, would be met with firm and vigorous action."⁶¹ During his presidency he did not decree a full mobilisation of military force, believing it unnecessary, and he maintained his promise of not embarking "upon impulsive adventures of high risk without full preparation, not only of our military forces but with due regard for the vital need to have a supportive county."⁶² However, Reagan did support military officials asserting military strength and projecting the United States military power to maintain international influence. Furthermore, to undermine Soviet Union control, soft power was enhanced and military actions were sustained, managed and limited. The methods of implementing this approach included increased economic incentives, influencing political agendas of opposed regimes, and supporting the friendly ones; and usually conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency. These preferred methods all required a smaller footprint (fewer casualties, USCA) and reduced the likelihood of escalating hostilities, especially with the Soviet Union.

⁵⁶ J. Carter, *A Full Life*, 202.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁶⁰ Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace*, 8.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 24.

In August 1980, Ronald W. Reagan addressed the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention as their nominee for President (note: a Republican rather than the previous four Democratic nominees). This speech addressed the mood of the nation and directly spoke to the concerns about the Vietnam war, and the concerns of heightening tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Reagan accused the Carter administration of been “totally oblivious”⁶³ and “sleepwalking far too long”⁶⁴ in matters of national security and foreign policy. In an attempt to unite the nation, Reagan resorted to the tactic used by previous presidents of the United States of highlighting the importance of being one nation together rather than abiding by traditional political allegiances: “When it comes to keeping America strong, when it comes to keeping America great, when it comes to keeping America at peace, then none of us can afford to be simply a Democrat or a Republican – we must all stand united as Americans.”⁶⁵ Additionally, Reagan called for the United States to accept its role in the international arena in order to establish peace: “Clearly, world peace must be our number one priority. It is the first task of statecraft to preserve peace so that brave men need not die in battle. But it must not be peace at any price; it must not be a peace of humiliation and gradual surrender.”⁶⁶

USCA was overtly recognised by Reagan when he acknowledged the existence of Vietnam Syndrome and its influence within US society and the conduct of statecraft: “For too long, we have lived with the “Vietnam Syndrome.”⁶⁷ Reagan did not shy away from the subject of the Vietnam War; instead he addressed the issue directly, suggesting that the war had been a noble cause because “[a] small country newly free from colonial rule sought our help in establishing self-rule and the means of self defense.”⁶⁸ He also stated that US guilt, shame and ‘shabby’ treatment of the veterans who returned dishonoured those who had died: “They fought as well and as bravely as any Americans have ever fought in any war. They deserve our gratitude, our respect, and our continuing concern.”⁶⁹

For Reagan, the lesson the United States should have drawn from Vietnam was: “If we are forced to fight, we must have the means and the determination to prevail or we will not have what it takes to secure the peace. And while we are at it, let us tell those who fought in that war that we will never

⁶³ R.W. Reagan, ‘Peace: Restoring the Margin of Safety’.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

again ask young men to fight and possibly die in a war our government is afraid to let them win.”⁷⁰ And his message to the US people was that if he was elected as the next president of the United States, allies would be reassured that the United States would remain strong and “restore the confidence and cohesion of the alliance system on which our security ultimately rests.”⁷¹ The US people would also be “given a better understanding of the challenge to our security and of the need for effort and, yes, sacrifice to turn the situation around.”⁷²

The collaborative work of Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger (1981-1987) and General Colin L. Powell (Senior Military Assistant) was a unique moment for USCA because:

- Two generations' combat experiences (World War Two and the Vietnam War) were mutually shared and their experiences were reflected in their policies.
- For Powell, when working with the Reagan administration, “it soon became apparent... [that] the World War II generation was back in the saddle.”⁷³ Captain Weinberger had risen from private to captain in the Pacific theatre serving under General MacArthur.
- USCA provided a theoretical foundation for the modernisation of the US military post-Vietnam. USCA was overtly identified and the Vietnam Syndrome and unofficially codified: a public acknowledgment of USCA.
- Weinberger openly supported the implementation of USCA and asserted that the policy mistakes of the Vietnam war would not be repeated.
- Weinberger consistently insisted that “it was a very terrible mistake for a government to commit soldiers to battles without the intention of supporting them sufficiently to enable them to win.”⁷⁴
- All these actions and occurrences further embedded USCA into the United States' strategic culture.

Weinberger credited his Harvard education for equipping him with a “healthy scepticism.”⁷⁵ His younger years were informed by his avid reading and interest in history, which he keenly pointed out in his autobiography. Around the age of twelve years old he read Volume One of Winston

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Powell, *My American Journey*, 257.

⁷⁴ Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace*, 6.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 4.

Churchill's *The World Crisis*. Reading it "brought me the greatest pleasure and the most vivid memories."⁷⁶ During his time at Harvard he followed "Churchill's lonely fight in the House of Commons for greater preparedness and his fury at the appeasement of Munich."⁷⁷ As a follower of Churchill he "marvelled at Churchill's ability to rally his own countrymen and their allies,"⁷⁸ and recalled being deeply unhappy in the 1930s with the United States' "isolationist and pacifist tendencies... which seemed designed primarily to keep us out of any war no matter what the cause."⁷⁹ Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* and *Memoirs of a Foxhunting Man* had a significant and lasting influence on him: "not derive[ed] from any glamour or excitement,"⁸⁰ but because it was to him the only "right and honourable way to serve."⁸¹

During World War Two, Weinberger served as an infantry officer where he was assigned to the 41st Infantry Division and sent to New Guinea. There he was struck by the United States' "total lack of preparedness for war itself,"⁸² and he noted that his training had not prepared him to fight in that terrain. He wrote: "None of us, officers or men, had seen a jungle before or had the faintest idea of how to deal with the tropics or the jungle environment."⁸³ Weinberger's experiences as an infantry officer went with him to the Pentagon; he wrote: "Simple truth I have believed ever since: it is an extremely risky and very dangerous business for any country to allow itself to become unarmed and unready for war;"⁸⁴ and under his leadership the DOD "vigorously opposed the application of small doses of force in messy waters for obscure political purposes."⁸⁵

The following events triggered Weinberger to create criteria for the use of force:

- On April 18, 1983, the US embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, was targeted by a suicide bomber: 63 embassy staff and CIA personal were killed.
- On October 23, 1983, the Marine Barracks at Beirut Airport in Lebanon were attacked: 241 US peacekeepers were killed.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁸¹ Ibid., 5.

⁸² Ibid., 5.

⁸³ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁵ Herring, 'Preparing not to refight the last war', 56-84: 74.

Domestically, these attacks caused outrage yet public opinion polling showed no clear consensus for an aggressive foreign policy response. Weinberger was “deeply troubled by the tragic bombings.”⁸⁶ Prior to April 1983 he had requested at a senior level for US troops to be withdrawn from their peace-keeping commitments in Beirut. He believed that the international force was “totally incapable of carrying out an intervention between withdrawing Israeli and Syrian troops, which were not in any case withdrawing.”⁸⁷ On hearing the news of the second attack, Weinberger was “horrified and frustrated, knowing that I had not been persuasive enough in the long series of meetings to secure approval for the withdrawal of our Marines from the international force.”⁸⁸ Furthermore, as Powell commented: “Our Marines had been stationed in Lebanon for the fuzzy idea of providing a ‘presence’.”⁸⁹ These attacks were the catalyst within the Reagan administration for an internal debate on the use of military force. However, senior members of the administration were split on the matter because President Reagan did not want to isolate the United States from other overseas commitments.

In response to the Beirut attacks at the DOD, Weinberger applied his “formidable lawyerly intellect to an analysis of when and when not to commit United States military forces abroad.”⁹⁰ With Colin Powell he formulated a ‘practical guide’ (Weinberger Criteria) to determine when US military force should be conducted.

The first public announcement of the criteria was in November 1984, in the speech ‘*The Uses of Military Power*’. Six tests were proposed to govern a situation when the United States would be required to “commit our forces to combat.”⁹¹

Weinberger articulated in his autobiography the six tests:

- Our vital interests must be at stake.
- The issues involved are so important for the future of the United States and our allies that we are prepared to commit enough forces to win.
- We have clearly defined political and military objectives which we must secure.
- We have sized our forces to achieve our objectives.

⁸⁶ Powell, *My American Journey*, 302.

⁸⁷ Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace*, 79.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁹ Powell, *My American Journey*, 291.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 302-303.

⁹¹ Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace*, 282.

- We have some reasonable assurance of the support of the US people.
- United States forces are committed to combat only as a last resort.⁹²

In short, the question is: “Is the national interest at stake? If the answer is yes, go in, and go in to win. Otherwise, stay out.”⁹³ Powell later wrote: “Clausewitz would have applauded.”⁹⁴ As discussed in the literature review, Weinberger’s criteria were never officially sanctioned, as the intention of the document was to assist future political elites in their deliberations on whether or not to undertake military operations. During the 1990s, Weinberger’s criteria were accredited as being a codification of Vietnam Syndrome, however, this thesis asserts that as these criteria do not overtly note a direct link to Vietnam Syndrome; it is more appropriate to consider the Weinberger criteria as being the first codification of USCA rather than the Vietnam Syndrome.

General Colin L. Powell pragmatically advocated and implemented USCA during the thirty-five years he served in the United States Army, and during his political career as President George W. Bush’s Secretary of State (2001-2005). Weinberger described Powell as “one of the finest military officers and persons”⁹⁵ he had worked with. Following on from his time working with Weinberger, Powell’s political influence significantly increased during the late 1980s and early 1990s, when he undertook the roles of National Security Advisor (1987-1989) and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs (1989-1993).

In his autobiography, *My American Journey*, Powell recalled in detail his military socialisation in the United States Infantry. Below are extracts which have been highlighted to demonstrate how USCA became subtly embedded during his training at Fort Benning and experiences as an Infantry Officer:

- Day one of training: “we mustered in front of the Infantry School by the legendary *Follow Me* statue... We were about to be taught a deadly serious calling and its creed was “Follow Me.”⁹⁶
- The infantry’s mission was “to close with and destroy the enemy. No questions asked. No ambiguity. No [grey] areas.”⁹⁷

⁹² Ibid., 282.

⁹³ Ibid., 303.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 303.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 180.

⁹⁶ Powell, *My American Journey*, 41.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 41.

As an Infantry Officer they were taught:

- “To go into battle up front, demonstrating courage, determination, strength, proficiency, and selfless sacrifice.”⁹⁸
- To “march into hell, if necessary, to accomplish the mission.”⁹⁹
- The responsibility to fulfil the mission whilst keeping “ourselves and our men from being killed.”¹⁰⁰

Importantly, Powell also learnt the principles:

- “American soldiers must know the reason for their sacrifices. Our G.I.’s are not vassals or mercenaries. They are the nation’s sons and daughters. We put their lives at risk only for worthy objectives.”¹⁰¹
- “If the duty of the soldier is to risk his life, the responsibility of his leaders is not to spend that life in vain”¹⁰² Powell acknowledged that “when I rose to a position where I had to recommend where to risk US lives, I never forgot that principle.”¹⁰³

Though these principles are not unique to the United States military (they are reflected in the codes of modern military training establishments around the globe), and nor do they create a culture of USCA, they do however contribute to embedding and reinforcing a culture within a society which values the lives of those who serve in its armed forces.

Powell endeavoured to be a battlefield soldier; his ‘first love’ was the “uniform, the troops, the Army.”¹⁰⁴ He completed two tours in South Vietnam (1962 & 1968), which formed a significant part of his military career. The first impression of going to war in 1962 as a military advisor, was of its brutality and this experience “shattered all the preconceptions”¹⁰⁵ of warfare. Powell recalled having learnt an indispensable lesson: that each US soldier “needed each other to survive.”¹⁰⁶ Several of Powell’s close colleagues and friends were killed in Vietnam, and he acknowledged that his experiences in Vietnam had lingered, spending “nearly twenty years, one way or another, grappling

⁹⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 42.

¹⁰² Ibid., 42.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 42.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 396.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 53.

with our experience.”¹⁰⁷ Powell accepted that “we had been sent to pursue a policy that had become bankrupt.”¹⁰⁸ Though Vietnam “rarely made much more sense.”¹⁰⁹

Powell considered war planning as “a mosaic of thousands of troubling details,”¹¹⁰ in which his “advice and decisions would be paid for in real lives.”¹¹¹ He undertook the responsibility of advising with care, respect and caution, especially when a President was required to make a decision on committing troops to military operations. Powell combined:

- His understanding of history, international relations and the craft of the art of war.
- He retraced the good practice of strategic planning and implementation which had gone before.
- His combat experience in South Vietnam.
- His experience overseeing the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Marine Barracks at Beirut airport (1983).
- Key components of his training (see above) which had also taught him that a leader must be “doubly vigilant and always check small things.”¹¹²
- His belief in “Stop, Look, Listen – then strike hard and fast with all the power you need.”¹¹³

All these factors were integrated into his advice and operational planning, and his approach did not change. Powell’s thinking and opinions on the use of military force have since become examples of good practice and have influenced US strategic planning and foreign policy.

General Colin L. Powell was a “reluctant warrior who, when sent into battle, wanted decisive results, with forces carefully tailored to the political objectives.”¹¹⁴ Powell understood the consequences of military misadventure and advocated that the United States should consider “economic power, diplomatic skills, and multilateral support as the cornerstones of all foreign policy actions.”¹¹⁵ However, it is important to note that Powell’s reluctance did not in any way suggest he was a pacifist, nor an isolationist - far from it; we can see this from his involvement in the invasion of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 82.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 49.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 82.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 26.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 126.

¹¹² Ibid., 109.

¹¹³ Ibid., 126.

¹¹⁴ C. A. Stevenson, ‘The Evolving Clinton Doctrine on the Use of Force’, *Armed Forces & Society*, 22, 4 (1996), 511-535: 518.

¹¹⁵ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 149.

Panama and Operation Just Cause (Dec 1989-Jan 1990). Although Powell naturally had a sense of self-doubt the night before the invasion, he had been prepared to be “involved in conducting a war, one that [he] had urged, one that was sure to spill blood?”¹¹⁶ He was determined to win clearly, which the United States did though with a loss of twenty-four military personnel. Powell commented that he had “made every effort to hold down casualties on all sides.”¹¹⁷

The lessons Powell absorbed from operation Just Cause were:

- Have a clear political objective and stick to it.
- Use all force necessary and do not apologise for going in big if that is what it takes.
- Decisive force ends wars quickly and in the long run saves lives.¹¹⁸

All of these lessons informed the practical implementation of USCA and from this point forth. Powell concluded that whatever “threats we face in the future, I intended to make these rules the bedrock of my military counsel.”¹¹⁹

Powell was the first joint Chief to operate throughout his whole term under the *Goldwater–Nichols Act*, 1986, which radically changed how the military went about reducing the competition between its different services. In 1990, Powell circulated a test publication called ‘*Doctrine for Unified and Joint Operations*’. Following a consultation period in 1993, Powell officially approved its first version. This document crucially distinguished between large-scale, sustained combat operations, and military operations which were deemed not to be a war of necessity, yet required the use of US force. As discussed in the literature review, these were later interpreted by scholar’s Stevenson (1996) and later Buley (2008) as the Powell Doctrine. Buley noted that the Powell Doctrine insisted that “military intervention should only be undertaken in cases where there was the assurance of popular support, a close conformity between political ends and military means, a swift victory, and a neat exit strategy.”¹²⁰ Buley added: “Military force *could* be used to achieve political objectives, but only if the military and political context conformed to a set of strict criteria,”¹²¹ which included:

- The armed forces should have clearly defined political and military objectives.

¹¹⁶ Powell, *My American Journey*, 427.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 434.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 434.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 434.

¹²⁰ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 65.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

- The relationship between ends and means must be continually reassessed and adjusted as necessary.
- There must be a reasonable assurance of the support of Congress and the American people.
- The commitment of US forces should be a last resort.¹²²

The implementation of these criteria was a practical way to achieve a lower casualty count (USCA).

The bottom line for Colin Powell was “War should be the politics of last resort.”¹²³ He continued to advocate for the use of overwhelming force noting that if you are considering getting into “Vietnam, Kuwait, Somalia, Bosnia, Panama, Haiti, or wherever, go in with a clear purpose, prepared to win—or don’t go.”¹²⁴ He aspired to provide practical advice on strategic matters when it was required and understood the limits that a democratic political culture places on a strategic and military culture. Therefore, he emphasised the importance of building strong and positive links between US citizens and their military. Though later he did concede that there are “dangers of stating such rules publicly and explicitly,”¹²⁵ especially when “potential enemies look for loopholes.”¹²⁶

To summarise, the objective of both the Weinberger Criteria and the Powell Doctrine was to prevent the United States military becoming engaged in military operations which may have resulted in significant casualties to its forces; which is USCA. Unlike previous historical instances, USCA was overtly recognised within US society, culture and its continuation was maintained and secured within the US narrative for a younger generation; most importantly though, USCA was overtly embedded in the United States strategic culture despite it being hidden in plain sight.

- Casper Weinberger and Colin Powell were both reluctant warriors.
- Both had battlefield experience and both were political realists.
- Their collaboration produced practical guidelines for the implementation of US military force.
- These guidelines are founded upon deeply embedded traits of USCA in the United States strategic culture.
- As the Weinberger criteria do not overtly note a direct link to the Vietnam Syndrome, it is more appropriate to acknowledge them as being the first codification of USCA because the

¹²² Ibid., 65.

¹²³ Powell, *My American Journey*, 149.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 198.

¹²⁵ Herring, ‘Preparing not to refight the last war’, 56-84: 74

¹²⁶ Stevenson, ‘The Evolving Clinton Doctrine’, 511-535: 515.

Vietnam Syndrome was a 'new' title awarded to deeply embedded USCA following the Vietnam War.

- Principally, this thesis considers the Weinberger Criteria and Powell Doctrine to be codifications of USCA.

Powell's association with the Vietnam War has allowed for the thesis of Vietnam Syndrome to take precedence over the premise that it was an instance of USCA being implemented. The questions asked by Powell were pertinent and should continue to be asked by any nation considering undertaking military action.

Case Study: Adrift

To fully understand the context surrounding the United States foreign policy over the past thirty years, it is important to re-examine two historical moments: the collapse of the Soviet Union and the September 11 terrorist attacks. Despite the distinct differences between these historical events, both of them shifted US public opinion towards international participation in military and humanitarian operations. Consequently, a new generation of US Americans were exposed to the experience of seeing their country engaged in warfare. This experience, along with US society's deeply embedded aversion to its own casualties, resulted in a shift in popular opinion, which returned the United States to cautious foreign policies. Yet, despite the significance of these two events and the resultant changes within US society, the United States' strategic culture overall remained unchanged.

Hostilities between the Soviet Union and the United States thawed during the late 1980s, culminating in the United States losing its "best enemy."¹²⁷ Condoleezza Rice wrote that having no external foe made it "exceedingly difficult to define 'national interest[s]'.¹²⁸ The rules of the Cold War were redundant and the United States foreign policy was "adrift without reliable navigation aids."¹²⁹ Mikhail Gorbachev had correctly predicted an identity crisis for the United States because he understood US society would have difficulty separating its "role in the world from its role as container of the Soviet imperium."¹³⁰ Powell recalled that Gorbachev had asked him "with a twinkling eye: "What are you going to do now that you've lost your best enemy?"¹³¹ Later that night

¹²⁷ Powell, *My American Journey*, 438.

¹²⁸ C. Rice, 'Promoting the National Interest', *Foreign Affairs*, 79, 1 (2000), 45-62: 45.

¹²⁹ Gray, *The Sheriff*, 40.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹³¹ Powell, *My American Journey*, 375.

Powell realised his primary purpose as a US soldier was no longer to “confront, contain, and if necessary, combat communism.”¹³²

In this new reality, Powell and his colleagues had to imagine a world without the Cold War. Any perception of victory over the Soviet Union was short-lived, as the United States' chief policy makers “had not been prepared,”¹³³ and consequently the United States did not seize the potential opportunity to seek new strategic opportunities and “affect the shape of the world to come.”¹³⁴ Domestically, US society grappled with important and divisive issues such as immigration, the place of religion in schools, and abortion. Bronwen Maddox wrote that “we Americans were not what we were, and uncertain who we were becoming.”¹³⁵ Powell accepted the end of the Cold War, and believed that to move forward the United States needed to “retrench, yet continue to maintain “the best damned Army in the world.”¹³⁶

Following the invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, it was deemed a necessity for the United States and its allies to take military action against Iraq. With the consent of the United Nations, on January 17, 1991, operation Desert Storm commenced under the command of the United States. To reassure those who were reluctant to commit US troops to military operations, the administration highlighted the technological advances of the RMA (discussed in Chapter Four), and the DOD implemented strict indicators and a strategy of overwhelming force to thwart any possibility of a significant counterattack. The White House reassured the US people that casualties would be kept to minimum. Statements overtly displayed caution and USCA (Vietnam analogy/Vietnam Syndrome): “This is not another Vietnam... It is not going to be another Vietnam.”¹³⁷ Furthermore, President G.H.W. Bush saw that lessons from past operations were implemented before launching military action against Iraq. The administration secured a vote of endorsement from Congress and the United Nations, as well as implementing the Abrams Reform, to mobilise military reservists.

During Powell’s daily briefing with President G. H. W. Bush, he warned him that the “battlefield is not a pretty sight,”¹³⁸ and the US people had to “brace ourselves for some ugly images.”¹³⁹ Powell

¹³² Ibid., 375.

¹³³ Bozeman, *Politics & Culture*, xxx.

¹³⁴ Rice, ‘Promoting the National Interest’, 45.

¹³⁵ Huntington, *WHO ARE WE?* 11.

¹³⁶ Powell, *My American Journey*, 403.

¹³⁷ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows the War*, 65.

¹³⁸ Powell, *My American Journey*, 513.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 513.

noted that the President also required reassurances from the DOD that throughout the operation US fatalities would be kept to a minimum, because analysts were predicting significant US casualties. Before signing off the Pentagon's strategy Powell was asked if airpower alone could achieve the operations objectives. Powell's response was: "Mr. President, I wish to God that I could assure you that air power alone could do it but you can't take that chance."¹⁴⁰ Powell added that "we will be successful with this plan and this is the plan we recommend."¹⁴¹ Powell reminded the President that "no military commander wanted to send his troops into harm's way without the full support of the American people and Congress."¹⁴²

When the first phase of the operation, the air campaign, was reported back to Powell, Schwarzkopf "was hard-pressed to conceal his excitement."¹⁴³ 850 sorties fulfilled their mission targets, which included Iraq's air defences; Baghdad was ablaze and its air force "barely made it off the ground."¹⁴⁴ Powell welcomed the good news but was apprehensive with respect to losses. Schwarzkopf's response was: "It's incredible"¹⁴⁵ that two planes appeared to be down, since they had "almost unopposed success."¹⁴⁶ Before the ground offensive began, Powell declared the coalition's strategy to deal with the Iraqi Army was very simple: "First we are going in to cut it off, and then we are going to kill it."¹⁴⁷ Powell wanted that the "world – and particularly Iraq – know our war aim unmistakably."¹⁴⁸

Operation Desert Storm was guided by strategic decisions which were a practical, if not necessarily conscious, implementation of USCA:

- 670,000 coalition troops (large-scale coalition force). This scale reaffirmed a commitment from the political administration that there would be enough resources both in troops, logistics and weaponry to ensure a prompt and successful outcome.
- Under the command of General Norman Schwarzkopf (US command). The United States insisted on full control of their troops. As research for this thesis shows, command of its

¹⁴⁰ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 39.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁴³ Powell, *My American Journey*, 507.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 508.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 508.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 508.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 509-10.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 510.

forces is a reoccurring practice, which was founded on the principle of protecting and preventing its troops from 'never again' being wastefully killed in warfare.

- The US Generals were tasked with making decisions on the ground. A decision to use US troops on the ground would be overseen by an US.
- There was a strict time frame in which the ground operation was to be conducted (it took around 100 hours for the Iraqis to be defeated).
- The RMA provided an "impressive array of stealth and precision weaponry to eliminate Iraq's communications, command and control systems,"¹⁴⁹ which therefore reduced risks to US troops. The exception to this was the Scud Missile malfunction which resulted in the deaths of 28 service personnel.
- Logistics bases were given up to 60 days' worth of supplies (included was water, fuel, food, spare parts) to fully support those in forward operating positions. General Schwarzkopf insisted on this precaution in case the operation became a "slugfest battle."¹⁵⁰
- The Iraqi air force was taken out. The prime reason was that they did not want the Iraqis to see the coalition's troop movements and could implement a manoeuvre which General Schwarzkopf called the "Hail Mary"¹⁵¹ (US football analogy).
- The alliance relied heavily on air and naval support.
- Special forces were on the ground in Kuwait to assist in the operation (a light troop footprint).
- Saudi troops took the East Coast where the Iraqi leadership anticipated an attack. This took the pressure off the two Marine divisions who took out and entered Kuwait through the supposed impenetrable barrier system.

"Peace is not without a cost,"¹⁵² and 143 US military personnel were killed in action.¹⁵³ As General Schwarzkopf said at the time: "The loss of one human life is intolerable to any of us in the military."¹⁵⁴ Operation Desert Storm's success was defined by the United States' low casualty count

¹⁴⁹ K.J. Hagan and I.J. Bickerton, *Unintended Consequences: The United States at War*, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd. 2007), 168.

¹⁵⁰ General Schwarzkopf, "Mother of all press conferences." 27 February 1991.
<https://archive.org/details/MotherOfAllPressConferences> [Accessed] 24/08/2021.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ U.S. Military Casualties - Persian Gulf War Casualty Summary Desert Storm, DCAS Report- Persian Gulf War.
<https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/reportgulfstorm.xhtml> [Accessed 01/09/2021].

¹⁵⁴ General Schwarzkopf, "Mother of all press conferences."

and President G.H.W. Bush declaration “By God, we’ve kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all”¹⁵⁵ provided US society and its elites with a confidence it had been lacking since 1975.

A perception grew that the United States “adopted a military strategy because of”¹⁵⁶ the operation’s low casualty count. Examining this assertion in the context of this event, it may seem that there is a strong basis for this theory. However, when examining the whole historical time-frame and critical events, which this thesis does, there is clear evidence of this approach in US statecraft being used before to prevent US fatalities. The difference this time was that USCA was overtly implemented during Operation Desert Storm, whereas previously instances of USCA implementation were subtle and embedded within the individual’s socialisation process. Following the success of Operation Desert Storm, the US military openly addressed its ‘casualty issue’ and from this point onwards, ‘*overwhelming force*’ became the textbook case on how to conduct large-scale land operations.

At first glance the United States foreign policy during the 1990s presents as being reactive, sporadic, contradictory and as a series of haphazard responses to international crises, as it oscillates between intervention and caution. However, the Clinton administration’s objective was to maintain peace and appease aggression through diplomacy, especially in the newly-created power vacuums, and not to become embroiled militarily. Below are examples that demonstrate the United States’ application of USCA during Operation Restore Hope (1992-1993):

- President George. H. W. Bush insisted that whilst undertaking the operation, Americans have full control over US troops. Despite the United Nations resolution not mentioning a member state to oversee the operation, the United States assumed control and led the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) with an additional contribution of US ground troops to oversee the distribution of humanitarian aid and food.
- The operation was defined as a humanitarian operation rather than a military or peacekeeping operation.
- The Pentagon’s primary objective was stated as being: “To distribute food and humanitarian supplies securely to the worst affected areas of southern Somalia.”¹⁵⁷
- President G.H.W. Bush did not want ground troops engaged in combat, as he wanted to avoid US casualties.

¹⁵⁵ Prashad, ‘The Vietnam Syndrome’.

¹⁵⁶ Brigham, Is Iraq another Vietnam? 153.

¹⁵⁷ J. Mayall, (ed.), *The New Interventionism 1991-1994, United Nations experience in Cambodia, Former Yugoslavia and Somalia*, (Cambridge, Melbourne & New York, Cambridge University Press. 1996), 112.

- US elites at both the Pentagon and White House were “anxious to avoid casualties (especially in the run-up to Christmas).”¹⁵⁸
- The United States “proceeded cautiously and with maximum... technical superiority to overawe the Somali population.”¹⁵⁹
- The ultimate demonstration of USCA: the announcement of a full US military withdrawal.

Hilary R. Clinton wrote that when “Bill pulled our troops out of Somalia, and for the next fifteen years the United States remained reluctant to commit military resources to Africa, although we remained active with political and humanitarian efforts.”¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, and controversially, it has since been reported that many at the Pentagon viewed the African continent as a “bottomless pit.”¹⁶¹

US involvement in Operation Restore Hope reinforced the view that the United States are not prepared to send their troops into military operations which they do not deem vital to their national security. Retrospectively, it is estimated that around 100,000 innocent lives were saved due to the intervention by the international community. Successes were made in repairing infrastructure, and there was a reduction in refugees crossing borders to countries already struggling with humanitarian issues. There is therefore a case to be made that Operation Restore Hope be reconsidered in the US narrative, since good work was undertaken in a harsh and unfriendly environment.

The administration openly acknowledged and advocated the implementation of USCA through open discourse with the US people, especially after the conclusion of Operation Restore Hope (1993). US foreign policy was hesitant and restrained in regard to humanitarian operations, as they were considered to be controversial, complex and “had no easy answers and elusive objectives.”¹⁶² For Condoleezza Rice and many other Americans, “intervention in these ‘humanitarian’ crises should be, at best, exceedingly rare.”¹⁶³ As these operations did not provide clear political goals, military action could not be decisive, and defining a clear operational end date for getting out was therefore very challenging.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 112.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 112.

¹⁶⁰ Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 286.

¹⁶¹ Stevenson, ‘The Evolving Clinton Doctrine’, 511-535: 523.

¹⁶² Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 156.

¹⁶³ Rice, ‘Promoting the National Interest’, 45-62: 53.

In 1994, the United States chose to not provide militarily assistance or intervention to halt the Rwanda genocide. This was action (inaction) founded upon USCA. Justifications of why the United States did not attempt to intervene vary; primary reasons were the ‘*twin disasters*’¹⁶⁴ of the military operations in Vietnam and Somalia, and the “memories of the military humiliation.”¹⁶⁵ US military inaction is founded on USCA. To sacrifice American blood, the cause must be deemed worthy enough. This has been a consistent trait throughout its history, which is also embedded in its strategic culture. Though it appears that inaction is due to previous failed military action, this is a rather short-term interpretation of American statecraft.

The United States continued to refrain from placing US troops on the ground in Rwanda, despite there being only a small and overstretched United Nations peacekeeping force. This force was under a considerable amount of strain during the genocide and did its utmost to protect those it could. The United States’ participation was strictly limited to logistical support once the relief mission was underway. With a clearer understanding of US casualty aversion and when these justifications are placed in their contemporary setting, it becomes clearer why the United States did not act; although it is certainly still unpalatable for those who advocate support for United Nations missions and humanitarian action.

Within US culture and society, as much as Somalia remains an unsuccessful operation, Rwanda remains a ghost of US inaction and failed diplomacy. For those who held political and military positions at this time, they agree there was a missed opportunity to take immediate action and to save lives. President Bill Clinton regretted his vow to the US people that “the United States would not send ground troops there, even to stop genocide.”¹⁶⁶

These following passages examine the United States’ involvement during the 1990s in the civil conflicts in the Balkans, and explores how the United States implemented USCA through inaction, cautious foreign policy, diplomacy and force protection.

Despite Yugoslavia’s tragic history, the Croats, Muslims and Serbs, had collectively formed a society which embraced the traditions, religions and histories of all three groups. Richard Holbrooke remarked in his cultural and historical observations: “It was famously said during Tito’s time that Yugoslavia had six republics, five nations, four languages, three religions, two alphabets and one

¹⁶⁴ Schulzinger, *A Time or Peace*, 194.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹⁶⁶ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 155.

party.”¹⁶⁷ They had “worked together in every walk of life. There was no noticeable physical or ethnic difference between them, and in fact, there was considerable intermarriage.”¹⁶⁸

A combination of notable events: the death of Tito in May 1980, the decline of Soviet influence and political power being handed back to Yugoslavia, triggered internal tensions, featuring “a uniquely evil cast of characters,”¹⁶⁹ who unleashed the “forces of nationalism, totalitarianism, racism, xenophobia, religious chauvinism, and pure old-fashioned thuggery.”¹⁷⁰ This effectively created a tinderbox within the region. Slobodan Milošević was intent on the restoration of Serb domination in Yugoslavia and offered “a powerful, irresistible ideological framework to Serbs everywhere in Yugoslavia.”¹⁷¹ He promoted the view that “Serbs must live in and be protected by greater Serbia.”¹⁷² It was this rhetoric that ultimately paved the way for ethnic cleansing and a land requisition by the Serbs. Hostilities first erupted in March 1991, between Serbia and Croatia. Bosnia attempted to remain neutral, and concerns were raised by the Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic: “The Muslims cannot defend themselves if there is war.”¹⁷³ At this time, 31 percent of the Bosnian population were Muslim. On March 3, 1992, Bosnia declared itself an independent nation, and the Serb aggression escalated. The Serbs effectively targeted any Bosnian who was non-Serb and was perceived to have resisted Serb rule. Throughout 1992 the Serbs took control of two-thirds of the country and expelled and killed a significant number of Muslims.

Internationally, the situation in the Balkans had been misjudged. The United States was explicitly reluctant to become embroiled in a civil war in Europe. The first act of US caution was: “Washington had turned a major security issue entirely over to the Europeans.”¹⁷⁴ During the 1992 Presidential election, candidate Bill Clinton criticised President George H.W. Bush for “failing to respond strongly enough to the Bosnian tragedy.”¹⁷⁵ Yet, during this same campaign Bill Clinton was forced to declare that sending “U.S. ground forces to Bosnia was out of the question.”¹⁷⁶ In his first term as president, Clintons’ policies for Bosnia were consistently “cautious – and ineffective – as Bush had been.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁷ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 26.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁶⁹ Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, 380.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 380.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 387.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 387.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 391.

¹⁷⁴ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 27-28.

¹⁷⁵ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadows*, 92.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 92.

As the Joint Chief of Staff (1989-1993), Colin Powell's advice was consistent when advising both Presidents G. H.W. Bush and Clinton on Bosnia: the US could choose between caution and limited air-strikes. Powell later wrote: "I emphasized that none of these actions was guaranteed to change Serb behavior. Only troops on the ground could do that."¹⁷⁸ Heavy bombing may have persuaded the Serbs "to give in, but would not compel them to quit."¹⁷⁹ Richard Holbrooke observed that during this period Powell "was especially opposed to American involvement."¹⁸⁰ Powell even described military intervention in Bosnia as being like "America was sticking its hand into a thousand-year-old hornet's nest with the expectation that our mere presence would pacify the hornets."¹⁸¹ Powell made a clear case for no US military intervention, especially on the ground. He believed that once the military was involved, the operation would escalate and then require a large American footprint on the ground, which would ultimately place US service personnel at risk against the Serbian forces.

Furthermore, in Powell's opinion, the Weinberger criteria (USCA) could not be met because a decisive victory was not possible. Powell recognised that his consistent message: "we should not commit military forces until we had a clear political objective,"¹⁸² was at times questioned, although the Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin (1993-1994), also shared this view. Powell's caution was informed by his own experiences: "[the] shattered bodies of Marines at the Beirut airport were never far from my mind in arguing for caution."¹⁸³ Russell Weigley and George C. Herring both considered that Powell had "overstepped his bounds, blatantly intruding in the political process and advancing a political position that was not properly his to take."¹⁸⁴ Powell provided what he believed to be an honest appraisal of the presidential administration, and later wrote on this matter: "To provide a 'symbol' or a 'presence' is not good enough"¹⁸⁵ and was not a reason to put American lives into a warzone. Powell, along with many other US elites accepted that "there are times when American lives must be risked and lost. Foreign policy cannot be paralyzed by the prospect of casualties."¹⁸⁶ However, the bottom line for Powell was: "lives must not be risked until we can face

¹⁷⁸ Powell, *My American Journey*, 576.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 576.

¹⁸⁰ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 52.

¹⁸¹ Powell, *My American Journey*, 291.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 576.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 291.

¹⁸⁴ Herring, 'Preparing not to refight the last war', 56-84: 80.

¹⁸⁵ Powell, *My American Journey*, 292.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 291-92.

a parent or a spouse or a child with a clear answer to the question of why a member of that family had to die.”¹⁸⁷

For many US elites, a war in Bosnia “occupied a low rank on the list of international commitments.”¹⁸⁸ Simply, they did not wish to become involved:

- Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger (1992-1993), had the official policy that until “the Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats decide to stop killing each other,”¹⁸⁹ there was nothing the outside world could do.
- Ambassador Zimmermann acknowledged that “American policy makers did not wish to get involved in Yugoslavia, and many considered the situation insoluble.”¹⁹⁰
- Ambassador Zimmermann asserted that President George W.H. Bush’s refusal to “commit American power early was our greatest mistake of the entire Yugoslav crisis. It made an unjust outcome inevitable and wasted the opportunity to save over a hundred thousand lives.”¹⁹¹
- During an exploratory visit, Robert C. Frasure “wondered constantly if in, post-Vietnam, post-Somalia mood, our nation would have the nerve and strength to stand up to what he called the ‘junkyard dogs and skunks of the Balkans.’ He believed in the need to use airpower, but doubted that the United States had the political will to do so.”¹⁹² Frasure did not return to the United States alive.
- When it was suggested to Joseph Kruzal that the DOD send US troops, he responded: “‘They wouldn’t like it...’ in his half-sardonic, half-joking style, ‘...because it would disrupt their training schedule.’”¹⁹³ Kruzal did not return to the United States alive.
- Tony Lake “had the Vietnam bug humming in his ear.”¹⁹⁴ Lake did not want to send US troops into an unwinnable war but agreed that conflict in Europe was a threat to US security.
- Warren Christopher became deeply frustrated and publicly referred to Bosnia as “the problem from hell.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 292.

¹⁸⁸ Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, 395.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 396.

¹⁹⁰ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 26.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁹² Ibid., 8.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 10.

¹⁹⁴ M. Albright & B. Woodward, *Madam Secretary: A Memoir* (New York: Talk Miramax Books. 2003), 180.

¹⁹⁵ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 55.

In February 1995, the Clinton administration published their National Security Strategy Report, which listed three categories of US national interest:

- “Vital, important, and humanitarian – with different guidelines for the possible use of force.”¹⁹⁶
- Vital interests were deemed as being “defense of U.S. territory, citizens, allies and economic well-being.” Call for doing “whatever it takes to defend those interests, including - when necessary – the unilateral and decisive use of military power.”¹⁹⁷
- Important interests were defined as “limited and conditional use of military force. The conditions include likely success, costs and risks commensurate with the interests at stake, and the failure of other means used to achieve the objectives.”¹⁹⁸
- Humanitarian interests: “the administration tends to rule out combat power and limits use of military forces to situations in which they can provide unique capabilities or respond to urgent, otherwise unattainable needs of those in distress. In these cases, the risks to U.S. troops are supposed to be ‘minimal.’”¹⁹⁹

Madeleine Albright (US ambassador to the United Nations, 1993-1997 and Secretary of State 1997-2001), was an anomaly within the Clinton administration because she “did not share the risk-averse mindset of the [US] military.”²⁰⁰ It is widely known that Albright subscribed to the Munich analogy to justify US military intervention, when she believed it was a required necessity. This thesis adds that within Albright’s justifications were deeply-embedded traits which influenced her advocacy for United States troops to be deployed. Documented within her memoirs are references to her deep roots and connection to the Balkans and its cultures. Albright was born within a European culture and the Albright family had direct ties to Yugoslavia; she wrote: “I had lived there, my brother had been born there, and my father had served there twice.”²⁰¹ Later, as an academic, she had also tracked changes in Communism, noting: “I had also spent a considerable time studying the [Yugoslavia] nation.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ Stevenson, ‘The Evolving Clinton Doctrine’, 511-35: 518.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 511-35: 518.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 511-35: 518.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 511-35: 518.

²⁰⁰ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 80.

²⁰¹ Albright & Woodward, *Madam Secretary*, 178.

²⁰² Ibid., 178.

It is a matter of record that Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell did not agree on the deployment of ground forces to the Balkans. Albright had become increasingly frustrated with Powell's presentations for military options; she wrote: "Time and again he led us up the hill of possibilities and dropped us off the other side with the practical equivalent of "No can do."²⁰³ Exasperated, Albright asked Powell: "What are you saving this superb military for, Colin, if we can't use it?"²⁰⁴ Powell thought he would "have an aneurysm because American GIs were not toy soldiers to be moved around on some sort of global game board."²⁰⁵ Powell recalled his response to Ambassador Albright's question as: "the U.S. military would carry out any mission it was handed, but my advice would always be that the tough political goals had to be set first. Then we would accomplish the mission."²⁰⁶ Albright wrote: "In the face of all his medals and prestige, I found it hard to argue with Powell about the proper way to employ the American force."²⁰⁷ Albright believed that the "lessons of Vietnam could be learned too well," and "no more quagmires" was not a "sufficient strategy in a messy and complex world."²⁰⁸ Albright became "an advocate of 'coercive diplomacy' through the use of limited force;"²⁰⁹ particularly in the case for Kosovo, whilst serving as Secretary of State under President Clinton.

The Europeans also failed in their appraisals to see the aggression and genocide which was being undertaken by Serb forces. The United Nations became "a hostage of its own obsession with peace talks."²¹⁰ On the ground, in Bosnia, forces conducting the peace mission became evidently frustrated. A British Commander of UN troops declared: "You cannot fight a war from white-painted vehicles."²¹¹ It was not until July, 1995 that the international community sought to change the outcome in the Balkans. It was reported that between July 11 - 22, 1995, over 8,000 men and boys were rounded up and killed; these atrocities became known as the Srebrenica Massacre. The international community was stunned by the destruction of Srebrenica, and Holbrooke wrote that "nothing in the war matched, or ever would match, Srebrenica. The name would become part of the language of the horrors of modern war."²¹²

²⁰³ Ibid., 182.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 182.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 576.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 576.

²⁰⁷ Albright & Woodward, *Madam Secretary*, 182.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 182.

²⁰⁹ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 80.

²¹⁰ Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, 397.

²¹¹ Ibid., 397.

²¹² Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 70.

The United States continued with their diplomatic efforts to bring peace. In November, 1995 in Dayton, Ohio, a peace agreement was reluctantly thrashed out. Holbrooke referred to a statement made by the former British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington: “[a] man of legendary integrity, told me later that he has never met such terrible liars in his life as the peoples of the Balkans.”²¹³ Milošević had learnt that the West was extremely reluctant to use force, even to stop genocide in Europe and “could be manipulated and deceived. Aggression paid: Dayton effectively recognized the partition of Bosnia and protected Serb claims to autonomy there.”²¹⁴ It was due to the incredible efforts and tenacity of Richard Holbrooke that the United States succeeded in obtaining an agreement.

Even at this stage, senior members of the government and Clinton administration still refrained from advocating the use of US force. However, according to Richard Holbrooke, *Op Plan 40–404*, was a critical document, especially against those who opposed sending US troops to Bosnia. The document stated that President Clinton had pledged that US troops would be used to support a UN withdrawal. There was, however, confusion regarding its status because President Clinton had never formally agreed to the document. Nonetheless, the NATO alliance had endorsed *Op Plan 40–104*.

Critically for the US, if the United Nations withdrew, *Op Plan 40-104* triggered the “immediate deployment of twenty thousand American troops into the heart of Balkans as part of a NATO force. The operation, which would have an American commander, would be impossible without the participation of Americans.”²¹⁵ Clinton’s administration responded by championing an avoidance of a UN withdrawal. The DOD raised its concerns about undertaking a “fuzzy mission,”²¹⁶ and openly insisted on mission security and force protection for its troops. Throughout the military operation, the US military enforced rules of engagement, which “sharply restricted the use of American forces, preventing them from pursuing war criminals or assisting the relocation of refugees and thus limiting their ability to implement the Dayton Accords;”²¹⁷ thus limiting their presence in situations which could escalate into further violence.²¹⁸

²¹³ Ibid., 30.

²¹⁴ Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, 402.

²¹⁵ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 66.

²¹⁶ Herring, ‘Preparing not to refight the last war’, 56-84: 80.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 56-84: 80.

²¹⁸ Note: because Operation Allied Force (Kosovo, 1999) is documented in earlier chapters, repeating related information would not add further value to the thesis at this stage.

To conclude, rather than the Clinton administration's policies being considered as inconsistent; instead, it should be praised for demonstrating a variety of responses and potential solutions to international crises, because power vacuums require thought, diplomacy, action, humanitarian aid and in some cases, military intervention. USCA was overtly implemented throughout the 1990s, and there was an acknowledgement within political circles in Washington that "humanitarian problems are rarely only humanitarian problems; the taking of life or withholding of food is almost always a political act."²¹⁹

September 11, 2001

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, "horrifically demonstrated, the geographic position of the United States... no longer guarantees immunity from direct attack on its population, territory, and infrastructure."²²⁰ It took less than 90 minutes to drastically change the direction of US foreign policy. The US people's "entire concept of what constituted security had been shaken."²²¹ It was an awakening to how dangerous the world could be both outside its borders, and now within. The United States had fallen victim to terrorist acts in previous decades, however, these attacks "eclipsed anything previously seen in terrorism."²²² America had been spared a major foreign attack since the British burned the White House in the War of 1812: "Yes, there had been the devastating attack on a military base in Pearl Harbor and there had been fears of a homeland threat during World War II, but the homeland had not been hit."²²³ Additionally, prior to this day "the term 'terrorism' had hardly penetrated the American psyche."²²⁴

President George W. Bush's response was clear: "Terrorism against our nation will not stand."²²⁵ In his September 12 address to his fellow people, he stated that the attacks were "deliberate and deadly," and these attacks "against our nation country were more than acts of terror. They were acts of war."²²⁶ The days which followed were "disorientating" and "marked by uncertainty and

²¹⁹ Rice, 'Promoting the National Interest', 45-62: 53.

²²⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review Report 2001 (QDR), 30/09/2001, III. <https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/qdr2001.pdf> [Accessed 09/04/2021].

²²¹ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 79.

²²² B. Hoffman, 'Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism since 9/11', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 25 (2002), 303-319: 303.

²²³ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 69-70.

²²⁴ W. K. Clark, *Winning Modern Wars, Iraq, Terrorism and the American Empire*, (New York: Public Affairs. 2003), 8.

²²⁵ President G.W. Bush, Remarks by the President After Two Planes Crash into the World Trade Centre, at Emma Booker Elementary School, Sarasota, Florida, 11/09/01. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911.html> [Accessed 05/07/2004].

²²⁶ President G.W. Bush, Remarks by the President in Photo Opportunity with the National Security Team, 12/09/01. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-4.html> [Accessed] 05/07/2004.

unease that come from operating in dangerous and uncharted territory.”²²⁷ The United States was totally unprepared for such attacks; Rice attributed this to “systemic and psychological reasons.”²²⁸ Far too little was known about al Qaeda and how it operated. Her immediate concern was when and where the next attack might be. General Wesley Clark later remarked that these events were “beyond the range of our experience.”²²⁹

As discussed in the methodology section, this research included the personal accounts of elite individuals, in particular, justifications for the deployment of US troops. Condoleezza Rice (National Security Advisor) provided an honest appraisal of the anxiety and vulnerability around the administration in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Rice did not shy away from acknowledging the impact of the day on her own emotions, and how her experience that day would later define her leadership at the State Department; she wrote: “I too had been marked by the attacks... in ways that wouldn’t easily be erased.”²³⁰ The bottom line for Rice was: “No security issues ever looked quite the same again, and every day our overwhelming preoccupation was to avoid another attack.”²³¹ Similarly, Hilary R. Clinton (New York’s Senator), was ‘horrified’ by what she saw the day after the attacks. For her, the images being broadcast on the television did not capture the full horror. Clinton described *Ground Zero* as a “scene out of *Dante’s Inferno*,”²³² and believed she had a responsibility “to stand with the people of our wounded city.”²³³

Understandably, citizens experienced shock, grief, vulnerability and humiliation; and these emotions were collectively and justifiably reflected in the United States’ rhetoric. The United States now had a declared enemy, and the President asked the people “to unite in steadfast determination and resolve. Freedom and democracy are under attack.”²³⁴ The concept of national security changed, and “an entire generation of young Americans [had] gained a new understanding of the value of freedom, and it’s cost in duty and in sacrifice.”²³⁵

²²⁷ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 104.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

²²⁹ W. K. Clark, *Winning Modern Wars*, 8.

²³⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 504.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

²³² Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 172.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 172.

²³⁴ President G.W. Bush, Remarks, 12/09/01.

²³⁵ President G.W. Bush, Address to the Nation, 07/10/2001. <http://www.whitehouse.gov> 14/10/ 2001. <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/bush911d.html> [Accessed 21/09/2018].

Though the September 11 terrorist attacks formed the catalyst for the United States to project its military power in overseas military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States strategic culture did not drastically change. Contained in the pages below are examples of visible, covert and implicit implementations of USCA during both military operations.

President George W. Bush (2001-2009)

When George W. Bush became the president of the United States, he had no ambition to be “a foreign policy radical.”²³⁶ Overseas military operations, as set out in Condoleezza Rice’s paper ‘*Promoting the National Interest*’ (2000) for *Foreign Affairs*, were not going to be a priority. The plan was to “refocus on the national interest,”²³⁷ and to “deter war, project power, and fight in defense of its interests if deterrence fails.”²³⁸ Rice stated that humanitarian operations “should be at best, exceedingly rare,”²³⁹ because their very nature could not be defined with clear political goals; nor deliver decisive military force and no exit date could be set. As a prospective presidential candidate, George W. Bush had shared similar concerns; he believed the United States had a “confused role in the world,”²⁴⁰ and its military power had limits which he believed “should not overextend its reach.”²⁴¹

The pre-election policy proposal emphasised caution and stability, and was incorporated into the *2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)*, published by Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld (September 30, 2001). This document was compiled by the DOD before September 11, 2001, though its forward was amended prior to publication. It stated that no “radical transformation was unwarranted,”²⁴² and the United States military was preparing to operate in a new reality of uncertainty and surprise.

Incorporated, was the principle that “to be effective abroad, America must be safe at home.”²⁴³ The foundation for the strategy was to defend the nation from another attack and restore “the emphasis once placed on defending the United States and its land, sea, air, and space approaches.”²⁴⁴ It was

²³⁶ D. H. Allin & S. Simon, ‘Americas’ Predicament’, 7-30: 9-10.

²³⁷ C. Rice, ‘Promoting the National Interest’, *Foreign Affairs*, 79, 1, January/ February (2000), 45-62: 46.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 45-62: 46.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 45-62: 53.

²⁴⁰ R.K. Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* (New York: PublicAffairs. 2006), 157.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

²⁴² M. O’Hanlon, ‘Rumsfeld’s Defence Vision’, *Survival*, 44, 2, Summer (2002), 103-117: 115.

²⁴³ U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report 2001 (QDR)*, September 30, 2001, III. <https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/qdr2001.pdf> [Accessed 09/04/2021].

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

'essential' to the homeland and also had a "capacity to project decisive military power overseas,"²⁴⁵ and an ability to "project power at long ranges helps to deter threats to the United States and, when necessary, to disrupt, deny, or destroy hostile entities at a distance."²⁴⁶

There were four foundational goals which were intended to provide guidance on the development and deployment of US forces:

1. To assure allies and friends that a "steadiness of purpose and its capability to fulfil its security commitments."
2. To "dissuade adversaries from undertaking programs or operations that could threaten U.S. interests or those of our allies and friends."
3. To deter "aggression and coercion by deploying forward the capacity to swiftly defeat attacks and impose severe penalties for aggression on an adversary's military capability and supporting infrastructure."
4. To "decisively defeat any adversary if deterrence fails."²⁴⁷

As the following paragraphs show, the DOD made recommendations for practices associated with, or founded upon, USCA.

The justification to increase funding for the DOD was based on the premise that the United States could afford to spend what was needed to "deter the adversaries of tomorrow,"²⁴⁸ and the financial cost did not "begin to compare with the cost in human lives and resources,"²⁴⁹ if the recommendations were not actioned.

The DOD committed to a clear purpose and commitment: "To provide for the safety and well-being of all Americans."²⁵⁰ The report emphasised the skill and character of the United States armed forces: "[they show] devotion to duty, and their willingness to sacrifice are at the core of our nation's strength."²⁵¹ However, the country had to provide the armed forces with the resources and support they required.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 14.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 14.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., IV.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., IV.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., IV.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., IV.

²⁵¹ Ibid., IV.

A new risk framework had been developed. It ensured that the DOD was sized, shaped, postured, committed, and managed with a view toward accomplishing the defence policy goals. It contained four related dimensions: Force management; Operational; Future challenges and Institutional. Force Management risks noted that the DOD:

- Must always be able to meet its missions.
- It must deploy forces to assure allies and deter potential adversaries.
- It must acquire new capabilities to dissuade potential enemies from challenging US interests; and, if necessary, it must defeat its enemies in combat.
- All of these risks require members of the military force to risk their lives at home and abroad for extended periods of time.
- The DOD should not expect its people to tolerate hardships caused by inequitable or inappropriate workloads within the force, ageing and unreliable equipment, poor operational practices, and crumbling infrastructure.
- This strategy required explicit measurement and control of force management risk.²⁵²
- The new force plan recognised the need to size military forces not only for the most demanding short-term war fighting tasks, but also for a plausible set of other short-term contingencies, including small-scale contingencies.

Promoting the defence of the United States was the top priority, and the DOD was required to focus and prioritise its efforts to mitigate operational risk.

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, the Bush administration resorted to *ad hoc* arrangements because the “governmental institutions simply didn’t exist to deal with a threat of this kind.”²⁵³ Presidential assurances were given to the US people that their ‘homeland’ would be protected by taking precautions, which included increased security at airports, and further funding to increase intelligence agencies capabilities. Their troops would not be intentionally put in harm’s way. Condoleezza Rice asserted that the new security concept had to link “defense, democracy, and development - each integral to the success of the strategy.”²⁵⁴

²⁵² Ibid., 58.

²⁵³ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 79.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 148.

Rice reviewed the administration's task ahead:

- A fundamental restructuring of United States security priorities necessitated by September 11.
- A review of how to defend the United States when given only little warning and the possibility an attack “might involve weapons of mass destruction.”²⁵⁵
- Defense in this new era required not just pursuing and defeating terrorists, but addressing the failed states that were breeding-grounds for terrorist activity, human trafficking, and the illicit trading of arms and narcotics.
- In order to help failed states recover, we would come to see the importance of building stable democratic institutions that could provide for their people and prevent the use of their territory for dangerous transnational networks.
- Finally, those fledging democratic states need foreign assistance to achieve stability.²⁵⁶

It should be noted that throughout this period of uncertainty and vulnerability, the United States elite citizens were instinctively and implicitly implementing USCA. An example is that the first action to be taken by the United States, was not military action. Instead, at the end of September:

- The president had the support of both the executive and legislative branches.
- Congress deferred to executive authority.
- The Department of Homeland Security had been created.
- The Patriot Act was promptly passed.
- The administration had obtained the political will and the support of the people to begin conducting military action.
- On September 23, President Bush signed Executive Order 13224: “Its intent was to freeze terrorist assets and disrupt the flow of funds to terrorist organizations.”²⁵⁷
- Combined operations (the Treasury and intelligence agencies) were set underway to “freeze and trace terrorist financing.”²⁵⁸ This continues to be a powerful ‘weapon’ against terrorists.

The following part of this chapter highlights references of implicit and open implementations of USCA under the leadership of both President G.W. Bush and President B. H. Obama. As the literature

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 148.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 148.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 112.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 112.

review showed, the respective presidents spent their eight years of service navigating the significant challenges of terrorism in order to provide the US people with safety and stability. Some of the reviewed scholars suggested that the United States had returned to a casualty-averse mindset, and the Iraq Syndrome. Though there are elements of truth within this assumption, both military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq were re-examined as part of this research process, with a focus on the political, military and US elites' considerations during the planning and execution.

These findings suggested that the United States did not return to a casualty averse state nor suffer from Iraq Syndrome; rather USCA was instinctively implemented by the elite citizens throughout, because USCA is deeply embedded within the United States' strategic culture through the socialisation of its citizens.

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF-A)-Afghanistan: 2001-2014

Contrary to the rhetoric of the Bush administration, the United States decision to conduct a military operation in Afghanistan, '*the Graveyard of Empires*,'²⁵⁹ was taken cautiously, because of USCA. The United States elites overtly acknowledged that there would be a substantial number of US troops required on the ground, leaving them vulnerable to attack. This operation would be high-risk, and realistically, there would be significant US casualties. Bob Woodward recalled speaking privately with President Bush, who told him this was "a war in which people were going to die."²⁶⁰

Operation Enduring Freedom–Afghanistan (OEF-A) was launched on October 7, 2001. Its objective was to "strip al Qaeda of its safe haven,"²⁶¹ and assist the Afghan people in gaining freedom from their oppressors. The United States intended to use every "tool in our arsenal – not exclusively military force,"²⁶² and to work with allies in the sharing of "intelligence and [to] disrupt terrorist finances,"²⁶³ and provide "development assistance with good-governance reforms and shifts toward democratic governance."²⁶⁴

An added consideration was the strategic potential of Afghanistan's geographical location: to its north are the central Asia states; to its south is Pakistan and India; west is Iran, and east is China. Historically, this is referred to as the '*Great Game*', and there is the potential to "transform the

²⁵⁹ Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 130.

²⁶⁰ B. Woodward, *Bush at War*, (London & New York: Simon & Schuster. 2002), 37.

²⁶¹ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 313.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

entire region,”²⁶⁵ with a stable and democratic Afghanistan. Though Rice understood that “Afghanistan would never grow economically and politically without a regional home.”²⁶⁶ Thus, on becoming Secretary of State (2005) the DOS was reorganised to reflect the “future geopolitics of the region.”²⁶⁷ Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan were assigned from the European bureau into a bureau with South Asian countries.

The Executive structure of the United States understood:

- This was a war and it would not be bloodless.
- Afghanistan was a landlocked country: there was the immediate issue of operational access (logistics and troops).
- The operation required an immense military presence.
- It required a coordinated diplomatic contingent.
- There would be US citizens on the ground.
- Afghanistan had a ‘violent political culture’ and history.

Additionally, Rice (NSA)/ Powell (DOS) understood:

- There would still be a requirement to have a need for U.S troops on the ground even if it was not a “big ground war.”²⁶⁸
- Operational strategy needed to include diplomacy and reconstruction.

During the planning stages, the DOD advocated that OEF-A’s strategy:

- Had a ‘light footprint’ from US troops (concerns over the estimated casualty figure).
- Requested that the President reject any strategies that required a large US ground presence.
- That the Afghans take the lead in the ground campaign; supported by intelligence and special operations forces and airpower.²⁶⁹
- The preference was for Immaculate Destruction and Special Operational Forces operations (SOF).

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 313.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 313.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 313.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 86.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 91-92.

President G.W. Bush supported the DOD and continually rejected proposals that required a substantial conventional military ground presence.

Below are pertinent examples of USCA being overtly considered and implemented in the preparation stage and during OEF-A:

The consensus in the Bush administration was that in the aftermath of September 11, the United States' people would be more accepting of military losses, but their expectations required management. President George W. Bush's speeches were constructed to rally the people, akin to those speeches of President F. D. Roosevelt in 1941:

- President Bush told the people: "A Commander-in-Chief sends America's sons and daughters into a battle in a foreign land only after the greatest care and a lot of prayer."²⁷⁰
- Congress was warned: "Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have seen."²⁷¹
- "We're a peaceful nation. Yet, as we have learned, so suddenly and so tragically, there can be no peace in a world of sudden terror. In the face of today's new threat, the only way to pursue peace is to pursue those who threaten it."²⁷²
- "We ask a lot of those who wear our uniform. We ask them to leave their loved ones, to travel great distances, to risk injury, even to be prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. They are dedicated, they are honorable; they represent the best of our country. And we are grateful."²⁷³
- In President Bush's October 6, 2001, radio address: "Our enemy is not the Arab world... Our enemy is not Islam... and our enemy is not the people of any nation, even when their leaders harbour terrorists. Our enemy is the terrorists themselves, and regimes that shelter and sustain them."²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ President G.W. Bush, Address to the Nation, 07/10/2001.

²⁷¹ President G.W. Bush, Address to Joint Session of Congress and American People, 20/09/01.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/print/20010920-8.html> [Accessed 05/07/2004].

²⁷² President G.W. Bush, Address to the Nation, 07/10/2001.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ President George W. Bush, Radio Address of the President to the Nation, 06/10/01.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011006.html> [Accessed 05/07/2004].

The President's rhetoric, tone and use of language was clear, commanding; and his message was amplified by the use of concise, bold and dramatic prose. The core message was that the United States was at war; US troops would lose their lives; though this was a just and worthy cause.

Concerns over public opinion fatigue were addressed with statements emphasising the requirement of patience from the US people. They would be required to maintain their support, despite the inevitability of loss of life. Examples include:

- "You will be asked for your patience, for the conflict will not be short. You will be asked for your resolve, for the conflict will be easy. You will be asked for your strength because the course to victory may be long."²⁷⁵
- "In the months ahead, our patience will be one of our strengths -- patience with the long waits that will result from tighter security; patience and understanding that it will take time to achieve our goals; patience in all the sacrifices that may come."²⁷⁶
- Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, reiterated that "one of the lessons of Afghanistan's history, which we've tried to apply in this campaign, is if you're a foreigner, try not to go in. If you go in, don't stay too long, because they don't tend to like any foreigners who stay too long."²⁷⁷

In-keeping with its strategic culture, the United States conducted OEF-A using *'technological efficiency'*,²⁷⁸ capitalised on RMA developments and drew upon the strength of its air force. Air power was a notable operational asset, operating in a region that utilised the dispersed locations of the NATO partners. The lighter troop footprint across all coalition forces required a significant amount of air support, which the United States provided, including "B-52 bombers, B-1 stealth bombers, and strike aircrafts (F-14s and F/A-18s)".²⁷⁹

It became increasingly apparent that there were limitations to precision weapons. The 2008 Human Rights Watch report stated that a combined reliance on airpower and a 'light' ground force to support counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations, had resulted in "large numbers of

²⁷⁵ Dumbrell & Ryan ed. *Vietnam in Iraq*, 125.

²⁷⁶ President G.W. Bush, Address to the Nation, 07/10/2001.

²⁷⁷ A. Roberts, 'Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan', *Survival*, 51, 1, February/March (2009), 29-60: 29.

²⁷⁸ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 82.

²⁷⁹ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 150.

civilian casualties, controversy over the continued use of airpower in Afghanistan, and intense criticism of US and NATO forces by Afghan political leaders and the general public.”²⁸⁰

It was incredibly difficult to distinguish between civilians and the informally-clad terrorist combatants.²⁸¹ The United States' continued justification for the use of precision weaponry was that its impact was less damaging to populations than “large maximally destructive dumb bombs... when compared to how economic sanctions affect civilians, modern air warfare using precision-guided munitions ‘stands out as an increasingly efficient, effective, and humane tool of foreign policy.’”²⁸²

OEF-A showed that despite technological advancements, an US ground presence was required, especially when attempting to maintain peace. The US presence on the ground was the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and special operations units. These units were successful in conducting missions in mountainous regions which weren't easily accessible for conventional military forces, and where there was substantially reduced logistical and infrastructure support. This light troop footprint of OEF-A, however, encountered challenges in trying to maintain peace. US commanders adapted their approach in response to the troop numbers and the security concerns. Notably, intelligence gathering was affected, since there was simply not enough HUMINT input for the intelligence cycle, and as a consequence, incorrect or unverified targets were being passed on, resulting in Afghan civilian deaths. This created an uneasy relationship between those delivering and maintaining the peace and the civilian populations.

It was never the intention of the United States to present an appearance to the Afghani population that their causes and safety were not worthy of sacrificing USs lives. However, US elites were trying to balance operational strategic aims, in a volatile country, whilst capitalising on the support of US citizens back home. Assurances were given to the US public that the operation was in the national interest, security for the US and for US troops were the priorities, and unnecessary loss was going to be kept to an absolute minimum.

'Immaculate Destruction' was intended to save lives and was deemed a significant solution to placing US troops in combat. The combination of the “technological dimension of the RMA, the new operational sophistication offered – a vastly more efficient style of warfare that could destroy the

²⁸⁰ Roberts, 'Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan', 29-60: 41.

²⁸¹ Mandel, Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War, 83.

²⁸² Ibid., 75.

enemy with pinpoint accuracy from great distances while minimizing the exposure of US forces to enemy fire.”²⁸³

Special Operations Forces (SOF) appealed to the US defence community because:

- It requires “relatively few American boots on the ground, and therefore low American casualties.”²⁸⁴
- Real-time knowledge of combat conditions could “ensure that maximum leverage is secured from stand-off precision firepower.”²⁸⁵
- It could provide the “vital link with local allies, who must do most of the fighting on the ground for themselves.”²⁸⁶
- The SOF “connected the needs of the local battlespace with the on-call precision firepower.”²⁸⁷
- The SOF “would seek out the terrorists.”²⁸⁸

Both were intended to keep US troops off the ground and to keep the official casualty count to a minimum (USCA).

Despite the challenges of using proxy armies, for example the complications and risks of becoming entangled in political agendas and “ethnic and tribal rivalries,”²⁸⁹ the Northern Alliance was used as a proxy army to maintain a military ground presence. This was replaced by an allied trained Afghan army, and police and border forces. General Tommy Ray Franks took the decision to provide the Northern Alliance warlords with funds to provide ground troops. It was described as a “bold act of genius”²⁹⁰ by Lieutenant General Michael P. DeLong, who noted: “It was still less than it would have cost to put even one US battalion on the ground. In that sense, it was a bargain – and more important, it would help keep thousands of U.S. soldiers out of harm’s way.”²⁹¹ Ben Buley’s assessment was more critical: “In retrospect, to point to the disastrous consequences of elevating

²⁸³ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 94.

²⁸⁴ C.S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, 251.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 251.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 251.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 251.

²⁸⁹ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 63.

²⁹⁰ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 115.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 115.

the economy in the expenditure of American blood and treasure in the short-term over the long-term political stabilization of the country.”²⁹²

The invasion of Afghanistan was swift, and a comparatively weak Taliban was effectively removed from the most-populated areas by the end of 2001. In contrast, the reconstruction of Afghanistan was an immense undertaking. Its foundations as a nation were weak: the infrastructure required modernisation and the economy was “dominated by corruption and the narcotics trade.”²⁹³ The Taliban regime had inflicted brutality on the Afghan people, especially its women, who required immediate protection. These objectives all required a ground presence, which to be successful, needed Americans on the ground in a variety of roles.

To assist with reconstruction, in 2002 the Bush administration introduced Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). This new model was “designed to couple the military’s protective forces with civil affairs officers and civilian personnel who were experts in development and reconstruction.”²⁹⁴ PRTs included coalition partners who were deployed throughout Afghanistan with a common goal “to extend the authority of the central Afghan government and help provide security and development to the Afghan people.”²⁹⁵ This was a further application of USCA, albeit implicit.

The US increased the role for private military firms to undertake contracts. This was not a new policy for the DOD, having previously entered contracts with private military firms to deliver logistics for US military deployment. Between 1994 to 2002 over “3,000 contracts with private military firms”²⁹⁶ had been assigned. A noted example of this procedure was in November 2001; the private contractor DynCorp was awarded a contract from the State Department’s Diplomatic Security Service to protect the Afghan President.

Using private companies to undertake these roles was a further implementation of a policy influenced by USCA that reduced the number of US military troops on the ground, and contributed to a lower official casualty figure for the United States forces. Again, this policy presented its own set of problems, especially the use of mercenary forces as there was historical evidence of being

²⁹² Ibid., 115 -116.

²⁹³ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 109.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 109 -110.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 10.

²⁹⁶ Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War*, 61.

“less scrupulous about the exercise of restraint during war, including respect for human rights and protection of innocent civilians in war zones.”²⁹⁷

On October 9, 2004, Hamid Karzai was elected as President, and on September 18, 2005, the new Parliament was elected. As the Afghan democratic processes strengthened, the Afghan government began to question the motivation for still having the coalition troops in their country.

By 2007 insurgent activity significantly increased due to a combination of factors, which included the Iraq invasion in 2003, and a shift in troop allocations, effectively “regulating Afghanistan to an ‘economy of force’ mission.”²⁹⁸ A prolonged operation required US elites to consider the justifications for a continued US presence. The United States assumed a lighter military troop footprint, rather than increasing its presence. This approach was copied by other NATO member states. The US public was becoming increasingly frustrated with the prolonged length of OEF-A, and public opinion was therefore moving towards the demand for a full US withdrawal. Adam Roberts (2009) observed that the opinion polls in “five NATO member states with a high level of involvement in Afghanistan show the public to be highly sceptical about it. An increase in such number’s risks running into opposition in many NATO states, and also further antagonising Afghan opinion.”²⁹⁹ Force numbers were a prevalent issue throughout OEF-A among coalition partners. Tensions increased the longer the partner forces remained operating in Afghanistan. NATO experienced “enormous strain as unequal distribution of responsibilities – and casualties – became a source of conflict among members of the coalition.”³⁰⁰ The governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Great Britain became irritated as other coalition members restricted their military presence.

The new administration of President B. Obama (2009-2017) set a narrow goal for OEF-A: “To disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and prevent their return to either country in the future.”³⁰¹ The Obama administration stated that the ‘Afghan problem’ required regional change, and this required working alongside Iran and Pakistan. It was not in the United States’ interest to place troops into Pakistan. The strategic emphasis was to reaffirm local structures in Afghanistan and to allow the Afghan people autonomy in their communities. This was initiated

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 63.

²⁹⁸ Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 151.

²⁹⁹ Roberts, ‘Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan.’ 29-60: 50.

³⁰⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 635-636.

³⁰¹ Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 132.

through Outreach programmes that began to establish community governance and community security to strengthen their own abilities to protect themselves and provided an opportunity for the United States and the coalition to begin reducing its troop footprint and prepare for withdrawal.

To maintain a military presence, the Obama administration favoured the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems (RPAS). The drones were effectively an 'eye in the sky' and were used against targets for intelligence gathering, surveillance and precision strikes. It was recorded that the use of QR-1 intensified under the Obama administration; in 2010 it was reported that "about 115 drone strikes were conducted in Pakistan, more than twice the number of attacks the previous year."³⁰² Effective use of drones reduced the number of US troops required on the ground.

Additionally, despite ethical concerns over the practice of targeted assassinations, the United States continued to deploy special operations forces, focussed on 'decapitation missions' and 'quick strike' operations against high-value targets of al-Qaeda's leadership. On May 02, 2011, it was announced by the United States that Osama bin Laden had been killed in action. Hilary Clinton later reflected that from the White House she had observed a spontaneous gathering of young people who were chanting "USA! USA!" They would have been children on September 11, 2001, and had "grown up in the shadow of the War on Terror; it had been part of their consciousness for as long as they could remember. Now they were expressing the emotional release our entire country felt after so many years waiting for justice."³⁰³

On December 28, 2014, combat missions ceased and OEF-A drew to a close. US diplomatic and military support remained in Afghanistan until August 2021.

To summarise, USCA guided the decision to have a 'lighter' US ground presence in Afghanistan and underpinned implementation of the following operational features of OEF-A:

- The United States kept conventional soldiers off the battlefield in an attempt to keep US casualties to a minimum.
- The United States forces that operated on the ground were kept 'light' to keep US casualties to a minimum.

³⁰² Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 153.

³⁰³ Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 197.

- For ground operations the United States utilised the use of Afghan proxies to minimise its own casualties.
- The Northern Alliance contributed to the removal of the Taliban, though this compromised security as there were difficulties maintaining control and loyalty of Afghans who served in the proxy army and later the Afghan forces.
- The United States provided air support to coalition members rather than deploying conventional troops on the ground.
- Operational dependency on the use of precision-guided munitions.
- Immaculate Destruction and Special Operations Forces.
- Precision weaponry became the US weapon of choice in Afghanistan.
- Overwhelming airpower supported ground operations.
- Operational chain of command was overseen by United States Generals.
- Private contractors provided services i.e., security.

Pre-Emptive Strike and Munich Analogy

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration began to shift its defence policy to pre-emptive action in an attempt to save US lives. The people of the United States and the Bush administration mutually agreed that these attacks could never happen again on US soil and “waiting until the threat explodes was not an option.”³⁰⁴ Gradually, the Bush administration moved towards pre-emptive action: “A pattern of beliefs in US foreign policy grounded in the principle that it is better to strike at the enemy before it can strike at you.”³⁰⁵

This was not a new policy for the United States, as it had “long maintained the option of pre-emptive action to counter threats to our national security, and international law has for centuries recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can take actions against an imminent threat.”³⁰⁶ Theoretically drawn from the Munich analogy, pre-emptive strikes and action was a theoretical modification. In US culture and society, the Munich analogy emerged as a counter-argument to USCA, as a justification for US military intervention. At the centre of their thinking was that a “failure to stand up to the aggression would as in the past ‘encourage further aggression by undermining the credibility of all commitments.’”³⁰⁷ Bronwen Maddox stated that the justification for the Munich

³⁰⁴ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 198.

³⁰⁵ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 2.

³⁰⁶ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 154.

³⁰⁷ Ryan, ‘Vietnam’, *Victory Culture and Iraq*, 111-138: 114.

analogy was that the goal of the United States' "statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system. This is the best way to provide enduring security for the US people."³⁰⁸

Madeleine Albright presented the Munich analogy as an alternative to the Vietnam analogy in the Clinton Executive. Albright was personally affected by the consequences of appeasement during the 1930s. Her grandparents (Korbels) were killed in the Holocaust. Her father, Josef Korbel (1909 - 1977), was of European descent, a former diplomat and had taught International Relations at Denver University. Amongst his former students was Condoleezza Rice, who justified pre-emption because "nothing in international history or law suggested that a country had to wait until it was attacked and then respond. Why not argue for the legitimacy of [pre-emption] as a strategy, which says that one can act in [self-defense] in anticipation of an attack, rather than simply trying to deter or contain terrorists and rogues?"³⁰⁹ Rice added that the Bush strategy stated: "The United States will not use force in all cases to pre-empt emerging threats, nor should nations use pre-emption as a pretext for aggression. Yet in an age where the enemies of civilization openly and actively seek the world's most destructive technologies, the United States cannot remain idle while dangers gather."³¹⁰

The international campaign against terrorism encouraged an elite cohort of advisors in the Bush administration, for example, Rumsfeld and Cheney, to advocate for further engagement through military force and coercive diplomacy, especially in the Middle East; both having established these security concerns in previous decades. The United States' experiences of terrorist attacks and hostage crises had stemmed from a lack of democratic representation in Arab societies, which had created weaker nations and caused economic instability of the oil prices. Though there is 'just cause' when examples of these incidents and concerns are applied, US citizens were killed or placed in danger. However, pre-emptive action was given as a justification for the invasion of Iraq: "We would try to build a democratic Iraq. And democracy in the Arab heartland would in turn help democratize the Middle East and address the freedom gap that was the source of hopelessness and terrorism."³¹¹

³⁰⁸ Maddox, *In Defense of America*, 76.

³⁰⁹ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 151.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 154.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 187.

The controversy surrounding this action originated in the debate of ‘what constituted an “imminent threat”?’

Equally, elite citizens’ theoretical influences and beliefs on US foreign policy influenced the administration. Interestingly, the theory of neoconservatism received a negative critique from those opposed to US military intervention in Iraq; however, it promoted Wilsonian ideals albeit to the right of the political spectrum. Neoconservative thinking originally took root amongst a small group of scholars based in New York in the 1930s; this original group included: “Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, Irving Howe, and Nathan Glazer.”³¹² A core belief of neoconservatism was the “idea that there was a universal hunger for liberty in all people and they would rise up to support democratic challenges to dictatorial regimes.”³¹³ Unlike Wilsonian thinking, they did not agree with the mantra of internationalism through international institutions, rather, they favoured US unilateralism and suggested that “international institutions, such as the United Nations, limit the United States and keep it from achieving many of its foreign-policy goals. Instead, they suggest the United States has the legitimate right to pursue its own agenda because it exerts a benevolent hegemony.”³¹⁴

Prominent advisors associated with *neoconservative* thinking in the Bush administration were Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol and Lawrence Kaplan. Wolfowitz served as the Deputy Secretary of Defense (2001-2005). He subscribed to the belief that the administration's war on terror should be seen as a war for freedom, and believed that the liberation of Iraq would be the first step to “democratizing the Middle East.”³¹⁵ Wolfowitz belongs to the cohort of elite citizens whose views and socialisation directly influenced the direction of the United States statecraft and military policy.

A brief examination of Paul Wolfowitz’s socialisation process highlighted:

- Born in the United States’, though his primary socialisation was influenced by his family's European thinking and values.
- His father Jacob Wolfowitz (1910-1981) was born in Warsaw, Poland, and immigrated to the United States in the 1920s. He would later learn that his family had perished in the Holocaust.

³¹² R.K. Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* (New York: PublicAffairs. 2006), 16.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 17.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

- Jacob received a PhD in mathematics, and collaborated with Abraham Wald on statistical papers until Wald's death in 1950. In 1951, Jacob became a noted Professor of mathematics at Cornell University.
- Abraham Wald was also of European descent (Hungarian), and had left Austria in 1938 for the United States at the invitation of the Cowles Commission for research in economics at Yale University.
- Wald would later mentor the nuclear strategist Albert James Wohlstetter (1913-1997), who Paul Wolfowitz studied alongside during his postgraduate education in political science.
- It has been alleged that Wohlstetter's career in USCAademia influenced the generation of political advisers who became known as neoconservatives.

A large proportion of Paul Wolfowitz's formative years were influenced by both his parents and their peers, who were all highly educated and had strong links to Europe. Contrary to the main body of US policymakers who were steeped in their own socialisation process toward favouring USCA, being exposed to European history, culture and thinking, during his socialisation process, could partially explain why Wolfowitz had been an advocate of pre-emptive military action and the Munich analogy, and was also a self-confessed Hawk.

Albert James Wohlstetter was an "early advocate for the development of the most accurate weapons possible, both nuclear and conventional."³¹⁶ In 1997, Paul Wolfowitz credited Wohlstetter as being the first and one of the most "influential people, to understand what a dramatic difference it would make to have accurate weapons."³¹⁷ Wolfowitz added that if you "wanted to understand Albert Wohlstetter you've got to understand how somebody can perceive that a seemingly cold technical fact like this fact about accuracy translates into a whole transformation of strategy and politics."³¹⁸

Following the conclusion of the Vietnam War, Albert James Wohlstetter shared his concerns about US isolationism. Wolfowitz shared similar views as his teacher about the Vietnam War. Wolfowitz believed that the biggest disaster to come from the Vietnam war was in fact the lessons drawn from it; he "feared that Americans might prefer to avoid intervention in the future rather than searching for more reliable tools of engagement. 'In effect', he feared that Vietnam might induce a populist

³¹⁶ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 92.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 94-95.

challenge to elite control of strategy.”³¹⁹ It is also worth noting that Wolfowitz did not self-identify with neo-conservative thinking, and that his political views and thinking transcended the political party system, having been affiliated with both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Pre-emptive policy was the policy that took the United States to war in Iraq (2003). Globally, this decision was controversial and the assessments of documents and autobiographies of those in the inner circle of the Bush administration demonstrate it was not mutually agreed upon. Andy Card, White House Chief of Staff (2001-2006), raised concerns over the ongoing military operation in Afghanistan and public opinion: “The American people would expect us to go to war against Afghanistan, not Iraq.”³²⁰ The early ‘successes’ of OEF-A further motivated those championing military intervention in Iraq because OEF-A demonstrated to the wider US public that military force could be applied in the national interest, because the new ‘American’ way of war enabled low casualty numbers.

Rice added to the debate, stating that there was “simply no convincing case to be made for a link between 9/11 and Saddam.”³²¹ Sections of US society believed that this was the rationale for an invasion of Iraq, even within the US military. For example, in 2004, the journalist Tony Paterson interviewed US troops on the ground in Iraq; Paterson quoted Colonel Dr Richard Jordan:

- “The memory of September 11 is the overriding motive for what the colonel and his staff clearly see as their role in the crusade against militant Islamic terrorism.”³²²
- “All of us watched the planes hit the Towers, we saw the bodies dropping. You can’t forget what happened”³²³
- “We are fighting for our lives.”³²⁴

There was a significant amount of friction generated among the senior officials at the White House due to opposing views set out by the elites at the State and Defense Departments. Colin Powell, as US Secretary of State, was “fundamentally opposed to military action in Iraq. He warned the time was not right and that it would fracture the strong coalition against the Taliban.”³²⁵ Rice has since

³¹⁹ Ryan, ‘Vietnam’, victory culture in Iraq’, 113.

³²⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 87.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

³²² T. Paterson, ‘After the Storm’, *The Independent Magazine* (London). 12 June 2004, 26.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 26.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

³²⁵ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 87.

confirmed: “Frankly, the President was squarely on the hawks’ side of the fence.”³²⁶ It has been claimed that: “The two had dissimilar styles: Colin was a cautious consensus builder in international politics, and Don was confrontational. Don rarely saw shades of [grey] on an issue, while Colin almost always saw nuances.”³²⁷ Powell and Rumsfeld “did subscribe to fundamentally different concepts of warfare.”³²⁸ Despite their differences both were united advocates of the implementation of USCA. When the justifications for the Munich analogy unravelled, pre-emption was undertaken to protect US citizens; at a simplistic level USCA was being implemented subtly by elite US citizens to protect their own.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)-Iraq: 2003-2011

Operation Iraqi Freedom represented a shift in US foreign policy from caution to pre-emption. On March 20, 2003, the United States and coalition partners launched *Operation Iraqi Freedom* (OIF), and the Iraqi regime promptly collapsed. Saddam Hussein was later captured in December, 2003. OIF demonstrated again that the United States military is more efficient at winning the battle than maintaining peace. Despite a successful start, there was a deterioration in the operation as early as April 2003.

Highlighted below are examples of USCA being implemented during Operation Iraqi Freedom:

- The operation was built on the foundations of what the DOD had believed to be successful in Afghanistan. As demonstrated above, USCA was implicitly or overtly implemented in a similar structure during OEF-A.
- *Rapid Dominance* later referred to as *Rapid Decisive Operations* rejected the use of force on force. The aim being to take complete control of the battlefield, in order to convince the enemy to be compelled “to surrender or to accept our aims short of imposing wide scale destruction.”³²⁹
- *Immaculate Destruction* would confine US military power to “the destruction of adversaries without burdening the military with a broader range of messy civil and political tasks.”³³⁰

³²⁶ Ibid., 159.

³²⁷ Ibid., 20.

³²⁸ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 106.

³²⁹ Ibid., 118.

³³⁰ Ibid., 115.

- Rice advocated that “*Clear, Hold, and Build*” should be immediately implemented. Instead, coalition forces “pushed through [and] chaos ensued behind them.”³³¹
- DOD officials and members of the Bush administration decided to “outsource as much of the burdens of the post-conflict stabilization as possible to others, whether they be allied powers, private military companies or local proxy forces.”³³²
- The primary rationale for the United States military relying on airpower in Iraq was to avoid deadly truck convoys and car bombs. By 2006, the road in Iraq had become the “war’s most significant center of gravity.”³³³

To protect and stabilise the Iraqi population required a large ground force. However, restrictions on troop numbers prevented active ground troops keeping order and effectively operating within Iraqi communities. The United States’ forces operating on the ground were unprepared because their “training and doctrine provided little preparation for the demands of irregular war.”³³⁴ Force protection became their priority; Gray noted that their “means of extraordinary fortification of a kind almost calculated to isolate them from the people they came to liberate.”³³⁵ It also led to a “cavalier attitude toward Iraqi casualties.”³³⁶ The United States military planners did not anticipate the Iraqi population becoming as hostile as it did, and had not provided enough ground forces for the operation.

Reconstruction became increasingly difficult and those deeply engaged in political negotiations and the diplomatic process, were becoming increasingly frustrated. Rice described the political situation in Iraq as being “an absolutely poisonous state in all directions as sectarian violence raged between the Sunnis and Shia.”³³⁷ Iraq had become a communal civil war, the “underlying dynamic of many communal wars is a security problem driven by mutual fear. Especially in states lacking strong central governments, communal groups worry that other groups with historical grievances will try to settle scores.”³³⁸ The main challenge was to get the Shia majority to engage fairly with both the

³³¹ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 189.

³³² Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 115.

³³³ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 42.

³³⁴ L. Freedman, ‘Rumsfeld’s Legacy: The Iraq Syndrome?’, *Washington Post*, Internet edition. 9 January 2005. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A58318-2005Jan8> [Accessed 09/11/2017].

³³⁵ Gray, *The Sheriff*, 26.

³³⁶ Freedman, ‘Rumsfeld’s Legacy’.

³³⁷ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 511.

³³⁸ S. Biddle, ‘Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon’, *Foreign Affairs*, 85, 2 (2006), 2-14: 5.

Sunnis and Kurds. Rice told the Iraqis that the United States was not prepared to “put our bodies in the middle of your blood feud.”³³⁹

Domestic pressure in the United States intensified the process for transferring power back to the Iraqis. For example, in 2006 the Republican party lost control of both houses of Congress. Responses included a surge in troop numbers (2007). The intention was to stabilise the country and prepare Iraqis to take complete control of the country. That same year, on Veterans Day, Vice President Dick Cheney included within his remarks: “Our troops are operating in the most complex and challenging environment imaginable... they are the best equipped force in our nation's history.”³⁴⁰

In November 2008, the United States and Iraq signed a security agreement to establish an US troop withdrawal and when the Obama administration took up office in January 2009, significant efforts were made to begin withdrawing US troops. By January 2012, US troop numbers in combat roles had been reduced to zero. The US vision for Iraq had failed, as a civil war escalated. The strategy was largely consistent with US strategic culture: withdraw, review, and proceed with caution. Following the return of sovereignty to Iraq, Steve Hadley (National Security Advisor 2005-2009) commented: “The Iraqis still have to liberate themselves. We’ve overthrown Saddam Hussein, but this won’t work until the Iraqis own their own freedom.”³⁴¹

Applying the minimum number of ground troops is a visible implementation of USCA. The United States did not commit enough troops to roles on the ground during OEF-A and OIF. This resulted in the military forces providing reactionary responses, which further exacerbated the instabilities in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Insurgency activity remains the United States' weakness because it requires troops on the ground, which is not compatible with its strategic culture because of USCA.

- The insurgents target civilians, especially those seen willing to work with the outside forces.
- Insurgency is successful because, as in Iraq, it was difficult for coalition forces to “separate friend from foe... increasingly the insurgency and the population were blending into one.”³⁴²

³³⁹ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 513.

³⁴⁰ D. Cheney, Remarks on Veteran's Day, Arlington National Cemetery, 11/11/07.

<http://georgewbushwhitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/11/20071111.html> [Accessed 28/01/2014].

³⁴¹ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 279.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 371.

- The urban environment is not compatible with the heavy firepower which the United States relies heavily on.
- In Iraq the coalition forces were required to conduct raids on towns and villages, and by apprehending insurgents and terrorists: “Often ended up inadvertently alienating the population even further... The average Iraqi was left to deal with the consequences of those actions.”³⁴³

Throughout OIF, US officials worked “tirelessly to keep body bags and flag-draped US coffins from public view.”³⁴⁴ US casualty figures began to draw media attention in 2004, with one newspaper writing: “The mounting death toll in Iraq has led to the shattering of a U.S taboo as bereaved families mount unprecedented attacks on the President.”³⁴⁵ Even with assurances to the US people from President G.W. Bush, he was accused of avoiding the ‘casualty issue’ altogether. David Ryan explained that the President “faced the most acute dilemma.”³⁴⁶ It was unrealistic for the President to address every US casualty; neither could he “selectively choose which memorial services or funerals to attend, and he certainly could not attend all of them.”³⁴⁷ It was also important for the Bush administration not to become “trapped in the daily body counts that had haunted the LBJ White House.”³⁴⁸

In the aftermath of the Iraq War, US society presented similar responses to those at the conclusion of the Vietnam War. US citizens loudly voiced their discontent towards their government. Regardless of how accurate each US citizen’s understanding of the Iraq war and its outcome was, there was a strong resentment within US society. Many believed that their elite citizens had misled the nation in their justifications for military intervention in Iraq. Once again, US citizens, notably its youthful generation, believed they had been misled and lied to, and they resented it.³⁴⁹

This period of US history under President George W. Bush however, should be regarded as a period of intervention for the United States, and one of overt implementation of USCA. As dynamics of

³⁴³ Ibid., 371.

³⁴⁴ Brigham, *Is Iraq another Vietnam?* 105.

³⁴⁵ W. Lowther, ‘Bring Our Girls Home’, *Daily Mail*, 13 April 2004, 8-9.

³⁴⁶ Ryan, ‘Vietnam’, victory culture and Iraq’, 111-138: 128.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 111-138: 128.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 111-138: 128.

³⁴⁹ Further research could have been directed towards surveying the national mood, prior to the American withdrawal and following it. However, for this thesis the significant focus was on how American foreign policy was implemented and how the American politic and society reached the decision that no longer was it justifiable to continue military operations, notably with ground deployments, due to the loss of American blood.

military situations on the ground deteriorated, and justification for military action began to unravel for OIF, the US people questioned the ongoing cost in blood to their nation. This led to a timetable of extraction dates. There is a substantial amount of literature which examines this period of US history, and the influence and decline of Rumsfeld. These sources are listed in the bibliography. Rumsfeld failed to listen to warnings from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former military elites; there was an inadequate number of US troops being deployed to Iraq.

For the Bush administration, there were two international events in Sudan and Georgia, which highlight these implementations. The DOD opposed any military intervention in Sudan. Rice stated that the Pentagon's case was "compelling: we can't take military action in another Muslim country, especially one in which a vital national interest isn't at stake."³⁵⁰ When reflecting on the inaction, Rice wrote that the crisis in Sudan represented: "the international community at its worst - smug and self-righteous about its principles, including the 'responsibility to protect,' and almost completely ineffective in actually acting on them in hard cases."³⁵¹ The United States was unwilling to oversee another military operation and remained steadfast in its reluctance "to put substantial forces into U.N. operations that it does not dominate."³⁵² Rice remarked that the case of Lebanon, 1983, had provided a justification for the administration's decision. Again, this is an example of elite US citizens reflecting on former military operations, which reaffirmed the principle of US casualty aversion within another presidential administration.

With regards to Georgia in August 2008, the impending escalation of an already intense situation in the region, as peace remained fragile, provoked debate amongst President George W. Bush's administration about an US response. During a discussion on the situation in Georgia, Rice directly asked President George W. Bush: "'Are we prepared to go to war with Russia over Georgia?' That quieted the room, and we settled into a more productive conversation of what we could do."³⁵³ Rice was sent to Georgia to reaffirm US diplomatic support. Throughout the visit she refrained from and avoided "any language that might be misinterpreted as committing us to Georgia's defense with arms."³⁵⁴ There would be no military commitment from the United States to Georgia.

³⁵⁰ Rice, *No Higher Honour*, 584.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 585.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 493.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 689.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 686.

To meet the concerns of its citizens, President's George W. Bush and Barack H. Obama both made foreign policy decisions which were influenced by USCA. Within US military discourse, Buley observed in 2008 that there was a "renewed orientation towards the 'societal imperative',"³⁵⁵ and this process would reflect "a renewed sensitivity to the limits of public support and a renewed concern to rebuild the military's links with American society."³⁵⁶

Barack H. Obama (2009-2017)

President Barack H. Obama stated: "Your security is my greatest responsibility."³⁵⁷ The Obama administration set out with the intent to administer a foreign policy which centred around "defense, diplomacy, and development."³⁵⁸ All three of the 'd's allowed for the United States to conduct its policies globally whilst implementing USCA. Despite attempts to scale back its military commitments, the Arab Spring in 2011 created a variety of destabilising situations in northern Africa, and the Middle East. The Arab Spring was greeted with reluctant optimism at the White House and the DOS. Hilary R. Clinton (Secretary of State) described this period of "lining up all these players and interests to forge a lasting peace was going to be like solving a Rubik's Cube."³⁵⁹

President Obama attempted to maintain a consistent approach to the consequences of the Arab Spring. This approach was underpinned by openly advocating the mantra: "No boots on the ground."³⁶⁰ His executive team were told that he wanted the US people to "know that the use of force is not our first choice and it's not a choice that I make lightly."³⁶¹ On September 11, 2012, the United States diplomatic compound was attacked in Benghazi, Libya. Four US Americans were killed, including Ambassador Chris Stevens. Clinton felt "ultimately responsible for my people's safety, and I never felt that responsibility more deeply than I did that day."³⁶² Later, she wrote that whilst observing the repatriation of the four at Andrews Air Force base: "Never had the responsibilities of office felt so heavy."³⁶³ The attacks were condemned by the United States, and security was enhanced at their diplomatic compounds. No US military ground force was deployed.

³⁵⁵ Buley, *The New American Way of War*, 145.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

³⁵⁷ B. H. Obama II, 'We Will Prevail Against ISIL -- Here's How:' [White House: Email] December 7 2015.

³⁵⁸ Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 24.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 375.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 375.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 383.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 406.

The press images of the chemical attacks on civilians outside Damascus, Syria, in 2013, provoked the international community to seek a robust response led by the United States. In response, the United States and allies maintained an active role in pursuing a UN vote, however, the Russian veto consistently paralysed the Security Council. For the Obama administration: “The risks of both action and inaction were high. Both choices would bring unintended consequences.”³⁶⁴ Syria became a ‘wicked problem,’ a term which was used by US planners and experts to describe “particularly complex challenges that confound standard solutions and approaches. Wicked problems rarely have a right answer, in fact, part of what makes them wicked is that every option appears worse than the next.”³⁶⁵

- The option of no action would escalate the situation into a humanitarian crisis and potentially cause further destabilisation in the region.
- The military option risked “opening Pandora’s box and wading into another quagmire.”³⁶⁶
- The DOD “consistently offered dire projections of the forces that would be required to overcome Assad’s advanced air [defences] and conduct a Libya-style no-fly zone.”³⁶⁷
- Justifiably, the United States did not wish to send aid and logistical supplies to ‘rebels’ on the ground either.

The course chosen by President B. Obama was to “stay the present course.”³⁶⁸

President Obama was an exponent of the strengths and tools of international diplomacy, especially collective action:

We have to broaden our tools to include diplomacy and development; sanctions and isolation; appeals to international law; and, if just, necessary and effective, multilateral military action. In such circumstances, we have to work with others because collective action in these circumstances is more likely to succeed, more likely to be sustained, less likely to lead to costly mistakes.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 464.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 461.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 461.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 462.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 464.

³⁶⁹ B. H. Obama, ‘Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony’, U.S. Military Academy-West Point West Point, May 28 2014 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2014/05/28/president-obama-speaks-west-point-graduates#transcript> [Accessed 03/06/2014].

As president, he remained steadfast in his opinion that the United States “should not be drawn once again into a long and costly ground war in Iraq or Syria.”³⁷⁰ In May, 2014, he told the cadets at USMA (West Point) that as “frustrating as it is, there are no easy answers, no military solution that can eliminate the terrible suffering anytime soon.”³⁷¹ He clearly stated to the next generation that as President, he would not “put American troops into the middle of this increasingly sectarian war.”³⁷² A wise decision for any leader at this time.

An overview of the Obama administration and its justifications for its statecraft demonstrate overt implementations of USCA. Chiefly, when an issue of international concern did not cause a direct threat to national security President Obama consistently stated: “When crises arise that stir our conscience or push the world in a more dangerous direction but do not directly threaten us – then the threshold for military action must be higher. In such circumstances, we should not go it alone.”³⁷³ If necessary, military force would be implemented when:

Our core interests demand it – when our people are threatened, when our livelihoods are at stake, when the security of our allies is in danger. In these circumstances, we still need to ask tough questions about whether our actions are proportional and effective and just.

President Obama also stipulated that US military force could be deployed, if necessary, unilaterally: “International opinion matters, but America should never ask permission to protect our people, our homeland, or our way of life.”³⁷⁴ On numerous occasions he reiterated his administration’s commitment to reducing collateral damage and maintaining a low civilian casualty number. When taking direct military action, those charged with its delivery were to uphold US values and standards, which meant “taking strikes only when we face a continuing, imminent threat, and only where there is no certainty there is near certainty of no civilian casualties.”³⁷⁵

³⁷⁰ B. H. Obama, ‘We Will Prevail Against ISIL’ December 7 2015.

³⁷¹ B. H. Obama, Remarks at USMA Commencement Ceremony, May 28 2014

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

Before concluding:

The following is a statement by President J.F. Kennedy which, resonates with a central idea in this thesis - that each generation of US Americans has continued to provide the next generation with the core values attributed to the Republic in its foundation:

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans-born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage - and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.³⁷⁶

These founding principles of the United States continue to be handed down to each generation of US citizens; not always at the same pace, they have however consistently remained. This is certainly true for the principle of USCA; due to its discreet nature and implementation it remained largely unnoticed within US society until the events of the Vietnam War when it was dramatically drawn to the nation's attention.

³⁷⁶ J.F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 20 January 1961 in *The Speeches of President John F. Kennedy* (Filibust Publishing, 2015), 17.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Through a detailed exploration of the United States history this thesis has provided its readers with an enhanced theoretical approach to understanding US strategic culture. It has also demonstrated why it is just as important to understand its elite citizens and their socialisation to establish a comprehensive understanding of the way in which the United States conducts its foreign policy and warfare.

This thesis intended to dispel the popular perception that the United States a 'warrior' culture because this is not the case. The US does not seek, nor does it wish to conduct warfare, especially when there is a significant danger to its own people. By reviewing the United States' history and its cultural narrative, there was evidence of a recurring pattern; despite the outcome of its military intervention the United States' return to cautious foreign and military policies. This thesis concludes that the reason for this pattern is US Casualty Aversion (USCA), which is deeply embedded within its strategic culture and implicitly implemented by its elite citizens due to their socialisation.

Casualty aversion is not exclusive to the United States; it is not a new concept; and nor should it be overlooked and dismissed as a theory. The assessment of USCA is not intended as a criticism of US statecraft and warfare, rather it is an impartial observation of patterns, traits and its elite citizens' behaviour. The reader should note that when this thesis states that USCA forms part of the United States' strategic culture, this thesis author is not merely saying that its citizens tend to be casualty averse. Rather, USCA has been so deeply embedded into US society, culture and ultimately its strategic culture, that it is implicitly implemented by its citizens.

Furthermore, this thesis states that the supposition that the consequences of military intervention in Vietnam established the United States aversion to its own casualties is a falsehood. This thesis acknowledges the importance of the US experience during the Vietnam War and presents its impact on US culture and society, which was later encapsulated by scholars in the term Vietnam Syndrome and later Iraq Syndrome. However, this thesis does not attribute the Vietnam War to being the main catalyst for the United States' aversion to its own casualties. However, as detailed in this document, when Vietnam Syndrome and other terms such as Force Protection and Iraq Syndromes are closely examined and defined, there is a consistent theme which is exposed; they were all founded upon an aversion to US casualties. Furthermore, when these terms were consistently substituted with 'USCA', a previously overlooked historical phenomenon emerges.

President George W.H. Bush's claim in 1991 that Vietnam Syndrome had been banished from the US consciousness was incorrect, because USCA is so deeply embedded in US thought that it would require a monumental change in US society. Even after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, USCA remained a prominent consideration for those US elites implementing US statecraft and military operations. The US people are implicitly averse to their own casualties and thus they are reluctant to engage in military operations which may cause significant casualties to their forces, much to the frustration of other nations, for example the United Kingdom in the early 1940s.

To fully understand how and why USCA is deeply embedded in the United States Strategic culture, this thesis examined the extent to which an individual's socialisation is connected to a nation's strategic culture, by examining a variety of sources related to their unique background and experiences.

US elite citizens whose socialisation is within US society are implicitly socialised:

- To deem warfare as a failure of diplomacy and politics.
- To not seek to conduct warfare which significantly endangers their own.
- To be naturally inclined to draw upon their strengths and find solutions in diplomacy, aid programs and soft power.
- To be instinctively cautious in their conduct of state craft and in military intervention.
- To engage with engineering, mathematics and Clausewitz's *On War*, to form the foundations of its military training institutions and programmes.

In regards to the method for this thesis, as the overall intent was to explain how USCA is theoretically anchored within US strategic culture and to present a complete account of the subtle relationship between the two, the method followed in the footsteps of Colin S. Gray's contribution to matters relating to the theory of strategic culture and his choice of definition for culture. The methodology noted that all theories have flaws, hence, in the planning stages a combination of theories were examined which included, grounded, realism and strategic culture. The research process recognised that critiques of strategic culture tend to focus on how to quantify culture and the misuse of generalisations and stereotyping however these shortcomings within the theory were acknowledged as a potential issue and best practice was implemented to avoid sweeping assumptions.

This thesis required a step away from scholarly convention by incorporating the autobiography as a primary resource. Having acknowledged and accepted that a selection of scholars would be reluctant to accept this, the decision to include them as so was made because of how important such a resource was. It enhanced the availability of data on individuals and assisted in establishing patterns of commonality in the thinking; provided pertinent information about an individual's socialisation; US society's values and narratives; and the historical context.

This thesis is unique and as previously stated, no one piece of scholarship until now has fully examined or presented within one document:

- The discrete traits of USCA.
- How deeply embedded USCA is in the United States society and culture.
- An overview of USCA's historical and cultural patterns throughout US history.
- A theoretical examination of how USCA is intertwined within US strategic culture.
- An examination of the relationship between US statecraft and socialisation.
- A commentary on the importance of the elite citizen in the continuation of USCA in US society.
- A revised supposition that the citizens of the United States are imperialistic and war mongering.
- A response to the supposition that the root cause for US military caution and USCA was a consequence of the Vietnam War.

US strategic culture is founded upon the principle of defence and caution because without its people there is no United States of America. USCA should be acknowledged as a key element of its strategic culture because its principles of defence and protection are rooted in the founding of the nation.

Additionally, this thesis establishes a theoretical precedent of examining both the strategic culture of a state and its elite individual's socialisation as these assist practitioners in understanding the 'why'.

Points for further consideration and exploration:

This thesis provides the new beginning to readdress particular suppositions about the United States' statecraft, warfare and its USCA. There are many avenues for other scholars to explore especially in regards to the link between the elite citizens, their socialisation and implementation of policy.

An area of interest would also be a transference of the theory into a practical application within diplomacy and intelligence gathering. Why would a nation decide to make such a decision? This question can be approached in many ways however none have fully explored the approach of combining the theory of strategic culture with a detailed examination of elite decision makers. This would be especially beneficial to those nations which tend to view the international arena as a mirror image of themselves.

The collected data on the elite individuals included many small quotes from a variety of sources and the volume could not be included within these pages. However, future projects can and should explore these as they provide so many important links to the historical context, an individual's socialisation and their nation's strategic culture.

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