

THE VIETNAM SYNDROME AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE U.S. PUBLIC AND
FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY DECISIONS DURING THE POST-VIETNAM
ERA BETWEEN 1975-1991

by

Kyle Giovannini



A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts in History

Boise State University

May 2020

© 2020

Kyle Giovannini

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COLLEGE

DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FINAL READING APPROVALS

of the thesis submitted by

Kyle Giovannini

Thesis Title: The Vietnam Syndrome and Its Effects on the U.S. Public and Foreign and Domestic Policy Decisions During the Post-Vietnam Era Between 1975-1991

Date of Final Oral Examination: 11 March 2020

The following individuals read and discussed the thesis submitted by student Kyle Giovannini and they evaluated their presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination.

David Walker, Ph.D. Chair, Supervisory Committee

Jill Gill, Ph.D. Member, Supervisory Committee

Nick Miller, Ph.D. Member, Supervisory Committee

The final reading approval of the thesis was granted by David Walker, Ph.D., Chair of the Supervisory Committee. The thesis was approved by the Graduate College.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would first like to give my upmost thanks and appreciation to Boise State University and more specifically the Boise State History Department for allowing me to use their services and institution while writing this thesis. Next, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Jill Gill and Dr. Nick Miller, for their support, mentorship, and constructive criticisms that helped sculpt this thesis. I would also like to give a special thank you to my committee chair, Dr. David Walker, for the past two years of his personal dedication to this thesis consisting of endless meetings, revisions, and debate - without your guidance, this thesis would have been severely lacking. Lastly, I would like to thank my lovely and talented wife, Juliana, not only for her support and encouragement through this difficult process, but also for her role as my editor. I cannot thank you all enough for supporting me through this process. Without any of you, this thesis would not have been possible.

ABSTRACT

First, the Vietnam Syndrome had a significant cultural impact on the American public which altered the U.S. public's collective cultural view of war from an interventionist to an anti-interventionist stance. Naturally, this shift in public perception influenced U.S. presidents' foreign and domestic policy decisions from President Gerald Ford to President George H.W. Bush. Second, the Vietnam Syndrome's anti-interventionist effect challenged the established security of containment policy through military intervention, forcing presidents and their administrations to implement different rhetorical approaches and messages to unshackle, in their view, America from the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on foreign policy decisions. Third, as a means to defeat the lasting impacts of the Vietnam Syndrome, the Bush administration and the U.S. military enhanced U.S. domestic policy through a multi-stage propaganda and media censorship campaign to rally public, congressional, and international support for the Persian Gulf War; which, upon America's victory in the war, established the New World Order and re-established America's security abroad.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
Historiography	6
CHAPTER ONE: THE CREATION OF THE VIETNAM SYNDROME AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE U.S. PUBLIC	15
Polling Data: Establishing The U.S. Public’s Altered Cultural View Of War	15
Factors That Created the Vietnam Syndrome.....	21
The Vietnam Syndrome and the U.S. Public’s Cultural Shift Towards War	27
Interest Groups and the U.S. Public.....	38
The Vietnam Syndrome And Popular Culture: Rewriting The Script Of The Vietnam War.....	40
Realist Narrative	42
Revisionist Narrative	47
President Ronald Reagan and the U.S. Public: An Anti-Communist Hollywood.....	51
Chapter One Conclusion.....	55
CHAPTER TWO: PRESIDENTS, THEIR RHETORIC, AND CHALLENGING THE ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST EFFECTS OF THE VIETNAM SYNDROME ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS	57
President Gerald Ford: The Tale of Two Narratives	59

President Ford: Rhetoric In Action	64
President Jimmy Carter: The Humanitarian Peace Broker	67
President Carter: Rhetoric In Action.....	74
President Ronald Reagan: Revitalization Of Interventionist Rhetoric	76
President Reagan: Rhetoric In Action.....	81
Chapter Two Conclusion	100
CHAPTER THREE: KICKING THE VIETNAM SYNDROME.....	102
President George H.W. Bush: New World Order Rhetoric	103
Using The ‘Just’ War Narrative: President H.W. Bush’s Propaganda Campaign To Form A Congressional Consensus.....	108
Enhancing Domestic Policy: U.S. Military Censorship Through Media Pooling	115
Addressing Additional Mistakes From The Vietnam War: The Powell Doctrine And Bush’s Clear-Cut Objectives.....	121
Realtering The Cultural Shift Of War And The Yellow Ribbon Movement.....	126
Chapter Three Conclusion	132
CONCLUSION.....	133
BIBLIOGRAPHY	142
Primary.....	142
Secondary.....	148

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.0	Term List.....	ix
Table 1.1	Polling Data	19
Table 1.2	Events That Widened The Credibility Gap.....	25

Table 1.0 Term List

Term	Definition
American Dualist Perspective	Exposure of the cognitive dissonance within the American public, where on one hand, Americans believe in the ideological principles of Wilsonianism, but on the other, are confronted with America's <i>realpolitik</i> enactment of foreign policy.
Cold War Internationalists	Perceived the Soviet Union as an expansionist power that, under the guise of peaceful coexistence or <i>détente</i> is lulling the U.S. into policies that bear a disturbing resemblance to those of Britain and France during the 1930s.
Containment Policy	A Cold War foreign policy of the United States and its allies to prevent the spread of communism after the end of World War II.
Credibility Gap	Any "gap" between an actual situation and what politicians and government agencies say about it. Describes public skepticism of administration's statements and policy.
Culture of War	A "culture of war" is an interlocking system of national meanings, beliefs, behaviors, institutions, and identities that consider violence and war necessary and justifiable in the pursuit of U.S. hegemonic global interests.
Détente	Peaceful coexistence where communications focus on the de-escalation of tensions through diplomacy and policy. A popular foreign policy strategy for post-Vietnam-era presidents due to the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome.
Interventionist	Favoring intervention, especially by a government in its domestic economy or by one country in the affairs of another.
Military Intervention	When the U.S. military is ordered by the sitting U.S. president to deploy to a region in conflict, either direct or indirectly with the U.S.
Post-Cold War Internationalists	Perceive a multi-dimensional game in which the logic of the situation will ultimately reward cooperation better, and in which outcomes are often, non-zero sum.
Realpolitik	Real politics that focused on practical objectives rather than ideological principles like Wilsonianism.

Semi-Isolationists	Believe that excessively internationalist American policies threaten America and have squandered resources and attention away from domestic affairs.
Vietnam Syndrome	a.) The disinclination of the U.S. public and Congress to engage or intervene in developing world (third world) conflicts. b.) An unacceptable restraint on the U.S. government's ability to conduct foreign policy in matters of national security interests abroad.
Vietnamization	Withdrawal of American troops from the Vietnam War
Wilsonianism	A uniquely American political ideology from Woodrow Wilson based on the rights of self-determination and international freedom and peace.

INTRODUCTION

“Moscow moreover, is probably genuinely concerned or uncertain about several developments that seem to have changed the terms of reference in bilateral relations and could potentially increase the likelihood of hostilities between the United States and the USSR or constrain opportunities for Soviet political gains abroad. These include... the end of the “Vietnam syndrome” and readiness of Washington to use force once again in the Third World, either by supporting insurgencies against the Soviets client regimes-as in Nicaragua or acting directly - as in Lebanon and Grenada.”

-Directorate of Intelligence, CIA

1983¹

This quotation by the CIA not only encapsulated the essence of the Vietnam Syndrome but also solidified the Vietnam Syndrome as a legitimate and measurable effect that both the United States and the Soviet Union openly recognized by the early 1980s. Similar to the United States and Soviet governments, scholars and academics alike have recognized the Vietnam Syndrome’s legitimacy and its lasting effects on America. Building upon the established scholarship, however, this thesis aims to examine and trace the effects that the Vietnam Syndrome had on the U.S. public, and, in turn, explain how these effects challenged the ways in which the rhetoric of U.S. presidents and their

¹Central Intelligence Agency, *Soviet Thinking on the Possibility of Armed Confrontation with the United States*, Directorate of Intelligence, December 30, 1983.

administrations created and implemented foreign and domestic policy decisions during the post-Vietnam era – decisions which ultimately culminated in President H.W. Bush's infamous declaration in 1991 that the Vietnam Syndrome had finally been 'kicked.'²

While this thesis is focused on determining how the Vietnam Syndrome impacted the U.S. during the post-Vietnam-era between 1975 and 1991, each chapter will answer several more specific research questions. It is clear through the historical record that the Vietnam Syndrome had several distinguishable effects on not only the U.S. public, but also on foreign and domestic policy decisions between 1975 and 1991. First, the Vietnam Syndrome had a significant cultural impact on the American public which altered the U.S. public's collective cultural view of war from an interventionist to an anti-interventionist stance. Naturally, this shift in public perception influenced U.S. presidents' foreign and domestic policy decisions from President Gerald Ford to President George H.W. Bush. Second, the Vietnam Syndrome's anti-interventionist effect challenged the established security of containment policy through military intervention, forcing presidents and their administrations to implement different rhetorical approaches and messages to unshackle, in their view, America from the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on foreign policy decisions. Third, as a means to defeat the lasting impacts of the Vietnam Syndrome, the Bush administration and the U.S. military enhanced U.S. domestic policy through a multi-stage propaganda and media censorship campaign to rally public, congressional, and international support for the Persian Gulf War; which, upon America's victory in the war, established the New World Order and re-

² George H.W. Bush, "Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council," *George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum*, March 1, 1991.

established America's security abroad. In order to fully comprehend the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on the U.S. public and foreign and domestic policy decisions during the post-Vietnam-era, one must first contextualize the mutual understanding between the U.S. government and its people, that the only way to defeat Soviet communism was through containment policy.

From the end of World War II until the Persian Gulf War, U.S. foreign and domestic policy decisions were thought of and created in terms of containment policy, and containment policy was predicated on the use of American force through military intervention. Understanding that containment through military intervention was the context of U.S. foreign and domestic policy decisions during the post-Vietnam era is vital to recognizing the importance of how the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome altered the cultural view of war within the American public towards an anti-interventionist posture within America. This anti-interventionist posture threatened the security of western democracies by challenging the established strategy of containment policy and military intervention. That is why presidents and their administrations viewed the Vietnam Syndrome as something to be defeated or "kicked," and in order to do so, they used different rhetorical messages to re-establish America's faith in its leadership and remove the shackles of the Vietnam Syndrome on U.S. military intervention.

This shared context is rooted in the containment policy first outlined by former Ambassador to the Soviet Union, George Kennan. Kennan first mentioned containment in a famous telegram known as the "Long Telegram" published on February 22, 1946. Kennan's telegram to Secretary of State James F. Byrnes was to inform him of the changes within the Soviet Union in response to western interests. Kennan concluded that

the Soviet Union and capitalist societies such as the U.S. cannot co-exist, sentiments which Stalin himself vocalized in 1927. With this conclusion Kennan suggested, among many things, that,

Much depends on health and vigor of our own society. World communism is like malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue. This is point at which domestic and foreign policies meets every courageous and incisive measure to solve internal problems of our own society, to improve self-confidence, discipline, morale and community spirit of our own people, is a diplomatic victory over Moscow worth a thousand diplomatic notes.³

By rebranding the global expansion of communism as a plague ravaging the earth, Kennan suggested that the internal strength and viability of the western world would determine whether the plague of Soviet communism expansion could be stopped. Over a year later in 1947, Kennan in his anonymous Mr. X article titled, “The Source of Soviet Conduct,” published in *Foreign Affairs*, proposed that the U.S. policy towards Soviet communist expansion should be focused solely on containment. Kennan defined containment as, “A long-term patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.”⁴ Kennan noted however, that “such a policy has nothing to do with outward histrionics: with threats or blustering or superfluous gestures of outward ‘toughness.’”⁵ Kennan’s interpretation of his policy of containment was thereby

³ George Kennan to George Marshall, Moscow, 22 February 1946, in *the Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State*.

⁴ George Kennan, “The Source of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947): 575, <http://slantchev.ucsd.edu/courses/pdf/Kennan%20-%20The%20Sources%20of%20Soviet%20Conduct.pdf>

⁵ *Ibid.*, 575.

predicated on containing Soviet communist expansion through economic and political means rather than physical ones. Regardless, Kennan's containment policy not only became the backbone of the Truman administration's foreign policy but was the preeminent strategy of the U.S. throughout the Cold War. Kennan's containment policy came under scrutiny however, dividing the Truman administration on how exactly to implement containment.

One man in particular, Paul Nitze, who was Kennan's successor as the Director of Policy Planning in 1950, interpreted Kennan's policy in more militaristic terms. Disregarding Kennan's concerns with military intervention, Nitze advocated for his more aggressive interpretation of containment, and his outward show of force garnered more favor than Kennan's version of containment which relied more on cultivating internal strength through economic and political vitality. This is evident by President Truman's signing of NSC-68, a document Nitze was instrumental in drafting, which states,

Further, it must envisage the political and economic measures with which and the military shield behind which the free world can work to frustrate the Kremlin design by the strategy of the cold war; for every consideration of devotion to our fundamental values and to our national security demands that we achieve our objectives by the strategy of the cold war, building up our military strength in order that it may not have to be used.⁶

⁶ "National Security Council Report, NSC 68, 'United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,'" April 14, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, US National Archives. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116191> (accessed August 5, 2019).

Nitze's militaristic interpretation of containment policy, however, did not downplay the economic and political factors that were necessary components to defeat the Soviet Union. Rather, where Kennan believed that containing Soviet expansion would best work through ensuring the vitality of the free world and applying political pressure, Nitze's interpretation of containment policy pushed for a strong and robust economy and political system that he deemed necessary in order to support and maintain the might of the U.S. military. By adopting Nitze's militaristic interpretation of containment policy, the U.S. had fully embraced their role as the policeman of the world, ultimately establishing the need for one leading global power – the United States. Now that the political atmosphere and context for Cold War America has been established, it is also important to clarify where this specific argument fits within the historiography of the Vietnam Syndrome.

Historiography

The historiography of the Vietnam Syndrome spans from the early 1980s through to the late 1990s. Within the Vietnam Syndrome historiography, works fall into two specific categories of exploration: cultural/domestic or foreign policy. Throughout the Vietnam Syndrome's historiography, categories alternate from publication to publication. For example, the first to be written on the Vietnam Syndrome, in 1981, pertains to its cultural or domestic effect. The next publication, in 1984, shifts focus and covers the effects on foreign policy.

The historiography of the Vietnam Syndrome begins with Michael T. Klare's book, *Beyond the "Vietnam Syndrome: U.S. Interventionism in the 1980s"*, published in 1981. Klare's publication aims to examine, in large part, the cultural and domestic effects

of the Vietnam Syndrome. He argues that the Vietnam Syndrome was not an obstacle to U.S. security because it prevented American intervention in developing countries conflicts that typically derived from inequality and despotism, fully complying with America's historical commitment to self-determination while simultaneously underscoring the beneficial nature of the Vietnam Syndrome in revealing the risks of American intervention.⁷ Klare further argues that the memories of paralysis and despair that Vietnam created remained strong after the war due to veterans and anti-war activists that aimed to keep these feelings alive and in the public's consciousness.

Klare claims that as long as these memories remain in the public's consciousness, the U.S. public would remain skeptical of its government's actions, allowing the Vietnam Syndrome to continue to discourage military intervention in the developing world. He writes, "Ultimately, however, the greatest bar to U.S. adventurism abroad is not so much any of these military factors as the surprising persistence of the Vietnam Syndrome."⁸ Moreover, Klare recognizes that the American public would most likely support military action in order to save the lives of hostages or to protect clear and identifiable objectives like Persian Gulf oil. He argues that the public would not support an indiscriminate use of the military to 'show resolve,' or as a means to suppress developing world civil disputes that show no immediate threat to U.S. national security.⁹ Klare even called for the American people to maintain the spirit of the Vietnam Syndrome, for it was the surest

⁷ Michael T. Klare, *Beyond the "Vietnam Syndrome: U.S. Interventionism in the 1980s* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1981): 97.

⁸ Klare, *Beyond the "Vietnam Syndrome,"* 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

way to prevent the U.S. from being dragged into another Vietnam ‘quagmire.’ He encouraged his readers to write to Congress opposing U.S. intervention in El Salvador since he believed that the restrictive effects of the Vietnam Syndrome would not remain without consistent reaffirmation of the public’s opposition.¹⁰ Klare’s cautionary message, however, was not heeded as will be explained in chapter two. Klare’s publication kickstarted the historiography of the Vietnam Syndrome with a call to action for the American public to maintain their skepticism of those in power.

Contributing to the cultural/domestic category, Arnold R. Isaacs in his book, *Vietnam Shadows: The War, its Ghosts, and its Legacy*, published in 1997, set out to describe the aftermath of the war and its lingering legacy in American politics and society. Isaacs focused on veterans and social and cultural rifts of the ‘Vietnam generation,’ the long-lasting impacts on U.S. foreign and military policy, and how Americans sought to make peace with their enemy and themselves.¹¹ He further argues that America’s epic victory in WWII in the 1940s compared to the outcome of the ‘bad war’ in Vietnam left an extraordinary impact on the national spirit. Furthermore, due to the unprecedented prosperity that the U.S. cultivated at home as well as in military and economic dominance around the world, Americans came to believe that their success was guaranteed, and Isaacs claims that this hubris led the U.S. to take its supremacy for granted.¹² The country that had invaded Vietnam in the 1960s, blinded by the memories

¹⁰ Ibid., 97.

¹¹ Arnold R. Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadow: The War, Its Ghosts, and Its Legacy* (Baltimore, MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), x.

¹² Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadow*, 7.

of past victories, had forgotten that it could fail. In his book, Isaacs also addressed the moral and ethical divisions that impacted American society.

While focusing on both the political and the social effects of the Vietnam War, Isaacs deviated from others by discussing the consequences of the Vietnam War on veterans as well as the entire ‘lost generation.’ According to Vietnam veteran, Randy Russin, the country had essentially already apologized to veterans for the years of hate and blame. Russin said he had “more or less accepted the apology but uses the analogy of losing a child, you are different from the experience, you just learn to live in spite of it.”¹³ Isaacs also comments on the lasting questions that the Vietnam War left unanswered for the ‘lost generation.’ He states that many avoided the questions: “What is worth fighting for? When is sacrifice necessary or justified?”¹⁴ Those issues and more were churned up in the political and cultural confusion of the era and arose from an uneasy, skeptical, and divided nation.¹⁵ Rather than focusing on how Americans fought or protested the war, Isaacs’ work focused on something he believed to be more profound – America’s divisive opinions regarding the Vietnam War reflected more than anything else, an unfinished argument about America’s national identity.¹⁶

The first publication on the influence of the Vietnam Syndrome on foreign policy comes from Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau’s book, *American Leadership in World Affairs: Vietnam and the Breakdown of Consensus*, published in 1984. It aims to examine

¹³ Ibid., 34.

¹⁴ Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadow*, 64.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 8.

one specific “aspect of foreign policy – the manner in which individuals occupying leadership positions in a broad range of public and private institutions perceived and evaluated that policy during two recent presidential election years, 1976 and 1980.”¹⁷ They elaborate further by stating that the “focus here is on how individual leaders perceive and evaluate international relations and American foreign policy [...] the foreign policy perceptions, beliefs systems, and orientations of American leaders are central to the role played by the United States in the world.”¹⁸ Their book examines the ways which Americans, especially their leaders, remained extremely divided on fundamental questions that guided American foreign relations.

Holsti and Rosenau’s study divides American leaders into three independent groups; Cold War Internationalists, Post-Cold War Internationalists, and Semi-Isolationists. The Cold War Internationalists’ viewpoint, is based on the premise of ‘the present danger’ and the actions that need to be taken to defeat it.¹⁹ Where Cold War Internationalists believe that the global system is like a chessboard with two opponents in a straightforward contest, Post-Cold War Internationalists view the global arena as a multi-dimensional game where eventually the logic of the situation rewards those who cooperate.²⁰ For example, a Post-Cold War Internationalist’s clearest issue between U.S. and Soviet interests would be in terms of arms control such as SALT and START treaties.²¹ Lastly, Semi-Isolationists are described as more concerned with domestic

¹⁷ Ole Holsti and James Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs: Vietnam and the Breakdown of Consensus* (London, England: Boston Allen and Unwin, 1984), xiv.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Holsti and Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs*, 109.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

problems, believing the threat to the U.S. is largely internal rather than from abroad. Holsti and Rosenau's three categories illuminate the points where American leaders diverged on fundamental questions of U.S. foreign policy in both the 1976 and 1980 presidential elections. Their study arrived at the conclusion that the effects of the Vietnam War had persisted past the end of the war in 1975, and both of their surveys and other evidence indicated that the efforts of the past several administrations to establish a consensus on foreign policy had failed, and no dramatic event had been able to bridge the divisions that arose from the Vietnam War.²² Following Klare's interventionists' perspective, Holsti and Rosenau's work provided a look at the lack of consensus within U.S. foreign policy. Departing slightly from the historiography's trend, Arnold Isaacs offered a more social perspective of the lasting effects of the Vietnam War on U.S. policy.

The next foreign policy publication is Geoff Simons' book, *The Vietnam Syndrome: Impact on US Foreign Policy*, published in 1998, which examines the psychological impact of the Vietnam War on the American populace in relation to foreign policy. He argues that the "emergence of the Vietnam Syndrome is simple and straightforward: only in Vietnam did the United States suffer a comprehensive military and political rout and unprecedented and unrepeatable defeat and humiliation."²³ Simons elaborates further on his argument by stating that understanding the past to inform the present is the only way to truly understand the trauma of the Vietnam experience on the

²² Holsti and Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs*, 249.

²³ Geoff Simons, *The Vietnam Syndrome: Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy* (London, England: MacMillian Press LTD, 1998): xvii.

American psyche.²⁴ Simons, as opposed to Klare and Holsti and Rosenau, takes a more psychoanalytical than political approach to making sense of the Vietnam Syndrome. Simons does, however, build directly on Holsti and Rosenau's argument, citing them directly to frame the Vietnam Syndrome in both a practical and psychological way. In the forward to the book, Tony Benn elaborates more on Simons' balance between foreign policy and psychology. He states that,

For him, one of the main concerns is the effect of the Vietnam War and the defeat it brought to America - both on the psychology of the United States and on the strategic thinking of the policy makers in the Pentagon and the White House. For the Vietnam Syndrome has played a major role in shifting America global strategy away from troop involvement to the options of mass bombardment, terrorism, and sanctions as representing the safest way of maintaining U.S. hegemony in the modern world.²⁵

Simons argues further that the horrors brought to Vietnam by American power had little influence in the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome, but rather the “*American* defeat, *American* pain, and *American* anguish”²⁶ created the syndrome. If the United States had committed all the horrors it did, but had won the war, there would have been no Vietnam Syndrome according to Simons.²⁷ Nevertheless, Simons continues to explore how the *American* suffering effected global politics.

²⁴ Simons, *The Vietnam Syndrome*, xviii.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, xii.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, xx.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Simons placed his argument within the context of America as an imperialistic society that had committed mass genocide in its imperialistic expansion west. He stated, “Without considering the early genocide, the racist assumptions, the imperial ambitions, and the significance of an evolving capitalism - it is impossible to comprehend the full import for the United States of the Vietnam defeat and humiliation.”²⁸ Simons also considered the long history of rebellion to western imperial rule throughout Southeast Asia and the Vietnamese fighting a war at home. He also focused on the point of view of America’s war abroad, which created massive domestic turmoil. Lastly, Simons concluded with the profiling of the face of hegemony, outlining how bought politicians contrived policies to protect and enrich the moneyed elite.²⁹ He went as far to suggest that the role that money played in the ‘pluto-democracy,’ revealed the principle motive behind the exercise of U.S. power throughout the world.³⁰ Ultimately, Simons arrived at the conclusion that a key lesson from Vietnam was how Washington should strive to win a necessary war by using unconstrained military power – that military as well as ethical constraints had no place in policies designed to strengthen the U.S. hegemony as the lone superpower.³¹

While aspects of Isaacs’ social perspective will be considered, this thesis will focus more heavily on aspects of Holsti and Rosenau’s three divisions view and Simons’ psychoanalytical slant. Aiming to position itself between the works of Holsti and Rosenau and Simons, this thesis addresses how presidents and their administrations from

²⁸ Simons, *The Vietnam Syndrome*, xx.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, xxi.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, xxii.

³¹ *Ibid.*, xxv.

President Ford to President H.W. Bush attempted to create a consensus through varying rhetorical messages that aimed to defeat the restrictions of the Vietnam Syndrome on U.S. military intervention. Focusing, as both works do, on the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on U.S. foreign policy as well as the psychological trauma that devastated the American populace. However, this thesis intends to add to the historical narrative by providing an analysis of U.S. presidents and their administrations' foreign and domestic policy rhetoric, and the reflection of their rhetorical messaging in their foreign and domestic policy decisions – a perspective within the historiography that is currently lacking.

Each chapter follows its respective research question. Chapter one aims to not only outline the factors that created the Vietnam Syndrome but also sets out to show how the Vietnam Syndrome affected the U.S. public by altering its collective cultural view of war away from the interventionist policy of containment and towards an anti-interventionist agenda. Chapter two, in turn, describes how each post-Vietnam era president dealt with the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome through deliberate rhetorical messaging and how each president challenged the Vietnam Syndrome within his rhetoric as a means to re-alter the cultural view of war within America. Lastly, chapter three illustrates how President H.W. Bush was able to sell the Persian Gulf War to the U.S. public, Congress, and the U.N., and re-establish America's national security abroad, thus creating for the first time in over a decade a consensus on U.S. foreign policy, effectively 'kicking' the Vietnam Syndrome.

CHAPTER ONE: THE CREATION OF THE VIETNAM SYNDROME AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE U.S. PUBLIC

The Vietnam Syndrome was created in large part by the U.S. public's reaction to the Vietnam War itself and its government's response and handling of the war. Factors including America's loss of the war, the war's questionable objectives, its casualty rate, the widening credibility gap, and the emergence of America's dualist perspective, all contributed to the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome, and led to a significant cultural shift in the American public from favoring an interventionist stance to an anti-interventionist stance. The anti-interventionist stance can best be summarized by the Vietnam Syndrome's first definition as America's disinclination to intervene in developing worlds' conflicts, which threatened the established U.S. foreign policy of containment. The Vietnam Syndrome, however, did not appear overnight. The use of polling data in the next section helps provide a clear picture of when the Vietnam Syndrome came about and when its anti-interventionist effects took hold.

Polling Data: Establishing The U.S. Public's Altered Cultural View Of War

As established in the introduction, U.S. foreign and domestic policy decisions during the post-Vietnam era were made by policymakers and different presidential administrations strictly within the parameters of containment through military intervention. Containment through military intervention was possible because the U.S. public's collective cultural view of war supported an interventionist foreign policy. One

which prided itself on the strength of its military and its members. Moreover, their interventionist cultural view of war was bolstered by America's monumental victory against Nazi Germany in World War II. Rescuing Europe and freeing the western world from fascism invigorated a tremendous sense of American patriotism, nationalism, and hubris concerning the U.S. military – an argument provided in Simon Isaacs' work.

The U.S. interventionist cultural view of war is explained by Anthony J. Marsella in his article, "The United States of America: 'A culture of war.'" Marsella argues that the core of America's imperial drive is rooted in a historical commitment to the belief of manifest destiny and American exceptionalism which created a culture of war that dominates U.S. foreign and domestic policies to this day.³² Furthermore, he defines the U.S. culture of war as "an interlocking system of national meanings, beliefs, behaviors, institutions, and identities that consider violence and war necessary and justifiable in the pursuit of U.S. hegemonic global interests."³³ It is this cultural view of war that drove U.S. interventionist foreign and domestic policies during the Vietnam War and initially garnered the support of the U.S. public.

That is why it comes as no surprise that in the early stages of the Vietnam War a majority of Americans were in favor of and supported military intervention in Vietnam. In fact, according to a Gallup poll conducted in March of 1966 which posed the question, "Are you more inclined to agree with the 'hawks' or the 'doves' (on the issue of fighting in Vietnam)?," the results showed that forty-seven percent of Americans agreed with the

³² Anthony J. Marsella, "The United States of America: 'A culture of war,'" *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, September 14, 2011.

³³ Ibid.

hawks' mentality, while only twenty six percent agreed with the doves'.³⁴ It is clear from this poll that the American public's collective cultural view of war in the early stages of the Vietnam War was in support of military intervention. However, as the war quickly started to escalate out of control, domestic support for the war began to alter.

In the same Gallup poll taken in 1966, personal reflection statements from the poll's participants were included. Many statements resembled ones like this from a mother of three living in Ravena, New York, who stated, "It's a necessary evil. If we can't convince these smaller nations that the U.S. is willing to protect their freedom, they won't be free for long."³⁵ However, other statements echoed the sentiments of a California machinist who said, "We should have followed the example of the French and never gotten involved with our troops in the first place. A year ago, who would have said it was going to turn out like this? Well, here we are."³⁶ The data from the Gallup poll revealed that by over the span of two years, by August 1968, the views of the California machinist had grown to become the dominant one within the U.S. For the very first time, a majority of the American population agreed that their country had made a mistake entering Vietnam.³⁷ What this Gallup poll proves is that by the summer of 1968, the U.S. public's collective interventionist cultural view of war had altered towards a collective anti-interventionist cultural view of war.

³⁴ Lydia Saad, "Gallup Vault: Hawks vs. Doves on Vietnam," (*Gallup*: 2019), <https://news.gallup.com/vault/191828/gallup-vault-hawks-doves-vietnam.aspx?version=print> (accessed on 10/23/2019).

³⁵ Saad, "Gallup Vault: Hawks vs. Doves on Vietnam."

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Further supporting the U.S. public's altered cultural view of war, another Gallup poll taken quarterly from August 1965 through November 2000, asked the question "In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the U.S. made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam?" The poll results indicate that between 1968 and 1969, the U.S. public for the first time believed that they should not have intervened in Vietnam and that it was in fact a mistake intervening in the first place. Both polls validate that the Vietnam Syndrome had in fact altered the country's collective cultural view of war towards that of an anti-interventionist stance.

Table 1.1 Polling Data

Date	Yes, a mistake %	No, not a mistake %	No opinion %
1971 May 14-17	61	28	11
1971, Jan 8-11	59	31	10
1970 May 21-26	56	36	8
1970 Apr 2-7	51	34	15
1970, Jan 15-20	57	33	10
1969, Sep 17-22	58	32	10
1969, Jan 23-28	52	39	9
1968, Sep 26-Oct 1	54	37	9
1968, Aug 7-12	53	35	12
1968, Apr 4-9	48	40	12
1968, Feb 22-27	49	41	10
1968, Feb 1-6	46	42	12
1967 Dec 7-12	45	46	9
1967 Oct 6-11	46	44	10
1967 Jul 13-18	41	48	11

Source: Gillespie, Mark. “Americans Look Back at Vietnam War” Gallup, November 17, 2000.

This altered cultural view of war made future U.S. intervention and containment policy problematic. “The U.S. opinion began to echo anti-interventionist, if not isolationist, sentiments. The public’s ultimate refusal to support an extension to the U.S. military action in Vietnam was a powerful reminder to policymakers and the military that public support was in the end decisive in determining the duration of military

interventionist foreign policy.”³⁸ Following the same sentiments, in his book, *Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon*, former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger opens up about the principle lesson he learned from Vietnam. Weinberger states that,

We could not suddenly explode upon the American people a full-fledged war and expect to have their support. American public opinion would have to support such action and would therefore have to be convinced that our national interests required, indeed demanded, that we go to war. Furthermore, if we did go to war, this time we would have to do so with all necessary resource and an unshakable will to win, instead of entering the war as we did in Vietnam: without any intention or plan to win.³⁹

After Vietnam, Weinberger realized that not only did the U.S. government require U.S. public opinion to be in favor of going to war, but the American public also needed to know that it was absolutely vital to their country’s national interest and security. The prevailing belief that nothing but U.S. military intervention could effectively contain the spread of communist influence around the world led post-Vietnam era presidents to rely on different rhetorical messages to challenge and re-alter the collective cultural view of war back towards an interventionist mindset.

³⁸ Richard Sobel, “The Impacts of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy Since Vietnam,” (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³⁹ Caspar Weinberger, “Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon,” (New York: NY, Warner Books 1990), 31.

Factors That Created the Vietnam Syndrome

Fueling the U.S. public's civil unrest and disinclination to intervene within developing world conflicts was the loss of belief in the war and the ultimate loss of the war itself. Officially, the Vietnam War started on November 1, 1955, however, the U.S. did not intervene or send U.S. military advisors into Vietnam until late 1961. Early on in the war, many Americans believed that the protection of Vietnam from the invasion of communist influence was vital to U.S. national security. The U.S. public was also experiencing the height of McCarthyism and the red scare which allowed for the policy of 'Domino Theory,' a spinoff from containment, to become popular, pulling the U.S. deeper into Vietnam. For nearly a decade, foreign policy towards Vietnam was based on assisting the South Vietnamese in their government's battle against communist influence, not fighting their battle; however, by the end of President Lyndon B. Johnson's first term in office, the Vietnam War began to escalate, pressuring President Johnson to act. From November of 1963 to August of 1964, he rapidly approved a series of memorandums and resolutions to combat the rising risk that Vietnam and Southeast Asia posed. These memorandums included NSAM 273, OPLAN 34A, NSAM 288, and the Tonkin Gulf resolution.⁴⁰ President Johnson's attempt to keep America in a limited-war within Vietnam failed, and on December 1, 1969 the U.S. Selective Service initiated two draft lotteries for the war effort. By this time, however, much of the American public had already become disillusioned with the war and many questioned if their government and military had any concrete objectives left in Vietnam. Draft dodging, anti-war protests,

⁴⁰ Kent Germany, "Lyndon B. Johnson: Foreign Affairs" (UVA: Miller Center, 2019), <https://millercenter.org/president/lbjohnson/foreign-affairs> (accessed September 1, 2019).

and sit-ins at military recruitment centers all had become common place within the U.S. by 1969.

Even more upsetting to Americans than the lack of clear objectives was the loss of the war itself. Up until Vietnam, the U.S. had not suffered a loss in war in the twentieth century. Representing the winning side in both World War I and World War II and successfully keeping communist influence out of most of South Korea, the U.S. boasted a winning military record. After the long drawn out quagmire of Vietnam, however, the Vietnam Syndrome was able to grow from the U.S. public's collective pain at experiencing their first military and political defeat. As Arnold R. Isaacs states, America's hubris was taken for granted causing significant trauma to the collective American psyche.

Further fueling the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome was the American's response to the immense casualties that the Vietnam War inflicted on U.S. troops. During President Johnson's period of ramping up U.S. involvement in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, the casualties of the war became a focal point of the U.S. public's disinclination to permit interventionist policies. Out of the total casualties of the war numbered at 58,220, roughly 48,320 were killed in the span of four years, between 1965 and 1969.⁴¹ Not only did this significant loss of life tragically affect the American populace, it prompted two different presidents to directly address the issue. First, President Johnson called for what became known as 'Vietnamization,' or the withdrawing of American troops from the war. Just prior to his period of escalating U.S. involvement in Vietnam, on October 21,

⁴¹ National Archives, *Vietnam War U.S. Military Fatal Casualty Statistics*, April 29, 2008, <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/vietnam-war/casualty-statistics#category> (accessed August 11, 2019).

1964, President Johnson gave his remarks in the Memorial Hall at Akron University where he famously stated, “We are not about to send American boys 9 to 10,000 miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves.”⁴² These remarks turned out to be hollow, however, with the continued deployment of troops to Vietnam for the duration of the war, and despite America’s continued protest of the war and draft.

Next, President Richard Nixon attempted to ease the U.S. public’s mind about the casualties of the war with a renewed message for ‘Vietnamization.’ Nixon stated, “In the previous administration, we Americanized the war in Vietnam. In this administration, we are Vietnamizing the search for peace.”⁴³ President Nixon knew that the country was not only deeply divided over the continuation of the war, but was also fully aware of the continued effects of the widening credibility gap that also contributed significantly to the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome. President Nixon directly declared in his opening statements of his speech, “I believe that one of the reasons for the deep division about Vietnam is that many Americans have lost confidence in what their Government has told them about our policy.”⁴⁴ President Nixon’s plan to ‘Vietnamize’ the war was a direct attempt to bridge the credibility gap and calm protests over casualties by reducing troop deployments and establishing a scheduled withdrawal of troops from Vietnam. By being clear about his and his administration’s plan and objectives, Nixon believed that the U.S. public would support his Vietnam policy instead of protesting it. While both President

⁴² Lyndon B. Johnson, “Remarks in Memorial Hall, Akron University,” *The American Presidency Project*, October 21, 1964, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/242136> (accessed May 30, 2019).

⁴³ Richard M. Nixon, “Victimization Speech,” *American History*, November 3, 1969, <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/richard-milhoux-nixon/vietnamization-speech-1969.php> (accessed May 30, 2019).

⁴⁴ Nixon, “Victimization Speech.”

Johnson and Nixon tried to address the country's issue with an objectiveless and bloody war, neither president could effectively bridge the growing credibility gap.

The loss of support for the war and belief in its objectives due largely to the high casualty rates were significant factors in the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome since they fueled the American public's drive for withdrawal from not only Vietnam, but all developing world conflicts. However, the widening credibility gap and the lack of trust that the American people had in their government helped create the Vietnam Syndrome, as well as sustain its lasting effects for the next decade and a half. Understanding that the credibility gap did not arise from one single event, it is only appropriate to list the many events and instances that led to the creation of the credibility gap. *Note this is not an exhaustive list.

Table 1.2 Events That Widened The Credibility Gap

Date	Event
Sept. 1954 - June 1977	The failure of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization.
Jan. 1964	Tonkin Gulf, Plan 34A, and Operation DESOTO.
Apr. 17, 1964	Paul Potter's Incredible War speech.
Sep. 19, 1964	Start of the Free Speech and Anti-War Movements.
Dec. 2, 1964	Mario Savio's Sproul Hall speech at the University of California Berkley.
Nov. 6, 1966	President Johnson's canceled multi-state political tour.
Jan. 1968	The Tet Offensive.
Feb. 1968	Photo of National Police Chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan shooting a detained Vietcong member.
Feb. 1968	Walter Cronkite's Stalemate report.
Mar. 1, 1968	President Johnson announces that he will not seek re-election.
June. 7, 1972	Watergate
June 8, 1972	The Terror of War photos by Nick Ut.
Feb. 1973	War Power Act

Lastly, factoring into the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome was the U.S. public's realization of their own cognitive dissonance in the form of the American dualist perspective. The American dualist perspective is made up of two opposing concepts: America's belief in the ideological principles of Wilsonianism, and the reality of America's *realpolitik* enactment of foreign policy.⁴⁵ When the Terror of War photos

⁴⁵ Wilsonianism being a political ideology based on the rights of self-determination and international freedom and peace contrasted with *realpolitik*, or real politics that focused on practical objectives rather than ideological ones

taken by Nick Ut were published in 1972, Americans were exposed to horrific images of Vietnamese children fleeing from a napalm bombing. These images challenged the notion that the U.S. represented the collective security of the free world established under Wilsonianism,⁴⁶ as well as the international rule of law and the protection of international human rights established under the U.N. with the signing of the Atlantic Charter on August 14, 1941.⁴⁷ The rhetoric of Wilsonianism, coupled with the U.S. leading the U.N. in its commitment to international law and human rights,⁴⁸ created a climate within America best described by former Under Secretary of State George Ball as, “the public wants sentimental tears with its politics.”⁴⁹ Perceiving their government as being dishonest at best and consciously lying to them at worst, the U.S. public believed there to be nothing just or humane about what had occurred during the war. Once the American populace confronted the reality of the consequences of war, they recognized their collective cognitive dissonance unique to the American dualist perspective and responded to it by continuing to call for more withdrawal of U.S. activities abroad, feeding into the anti-interventionist narrative of the Vietnam Syndrome.

⁴⁶ Woodrow Wilson, “Fourteen Points Speech,” *Congressional Hearing*, January 8, 1918, <https://kr.usembassy.gov/education-culture/infopedia-usa/living-documents-american-history-democracy/woodrow-wilson-fourteen-points-speech-1918/> (accessed July 1, 2019).

⁴⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, “Atlantic Charter,” August 14, 1941, <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/atlantic.asp> (accessed July 1, 2019).

⁴⁸ “United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” United Nations, December 10, 1948, <https://www.jus.uio.no/lm/un.universal.declaration.of.human.rights.1948/portrait.a4.pdf> (accessed July 1, 2019).

⁴⁹ George Ball, *Diplomacy for a Crowded World* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1976): 53.

The Vietnam Syndrome and the U.S. Public's Cultural Shift Towards War

Following the conclusion of WWI, the U.S. entered a drastically new cultural reality. The period known as the roaring twenties, a time for flappers and bootleggers, was a clear indicator of a society and culture in rebellion and accompanied America's adoption of an isolationist stance within its foreign policy. Unwilling to get mixed into the affairs of Europe and choosing to focus inward instead on domestic issues, became the focal point of U.S. politics until the event of December 7, 1941, which drew the U.S. back into the global arena. The U.S. rose to become one of the only superpowers after the war and encouraged western democracy as the ideal political ideology. This mindset led the U.S. into the Cold War where containment policy was established as the default foreign policy stance aimed at defeating Soviet communism. Containment policy drove the decisions to enact war first in Korea in the 1950s and then Vietnam in the 1960s. The creation of the credibility gap and the Vietnam Syndrome on the psyches of Americans, combined with the devastating loss of the Vietnam War, however, challenged this policy, and similar to the isolationist aftermath of WWI, the Vietnam War and the Vietnam Syndrome altered the collective cultural view of war within the American public towards favoring an anti-interventionist foreign policy agenda.

Discussing the U.S. public's change in the collective cultural view of war, Geoff Simons examined the core trauma that the Vietnam Syndrome had on America. Simons argues that the psychiatry of the Vietnam Syndrome was one of paranoia, shock, amnesia, and emotional collapse, described as a national state rather than a specific state of some individuals.⁵⁰ Simons' work established that the Vietnam Syndrome took a significant toll

⁵⁰ Simons, *The Vietnam Syndrome*, 9.

on America's collective consciousness rather than just individuals. This is an important distinction to make because he claims that the impact of the Vietnam Syndrome on presidents and their administrations was achieved by a collective effect rather than a singular one on the part of individuals or local groups. The collective pressure from the U.S. public for an anti-interventionist agenda heavily restricted the ability of presidents and their administrations, most notably those of Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush, to conduct foreign policy by force, and from their perspectives, unable to defend vital national security interests abroad.

One consequence of the Vietnam War, Simons argues, was the creation of a significant psychiatric impairment within the American public caused by the loss of the war similar to a traumatized individual throwing oneself into exile.⁵¹ The trauma that they perceived left a significant lasting impact that seemed to be branded into the national consciousness. Simons quotes "an inability to forget, a resistance to the everyday workings of historical amnesia, despite the serious and coordinated efforts of the government and much of the press to 'heal the wounds' of the war by encouraging such forgetting."⁵² The fact that the U.S. public maintained the memory of the horrors of the war enabled the Vietnam Syndrome to continue influencing their longing for an anti-interventionist stance and the country's collective cultural view of war continued to favor anti-interventionism throughout the early to mid-1970s. Even after President Nixon proclaimed that there would be 'no more Vietnams,' Americans continued to show significant reservations towards U.S. military intervention.⁵³ They showed such distaste

⁵¹ Simons, *The Vietnam Syndrome*, 10.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵³ Richard Nixon, *No More Vietnams* (New York, NY: Avon Books, 1994).

for intervention that many began to speculate if the U.S. government would ever successfully use military intervention again. President Nixon stated that America's defeat in Vietnam "turned us into a military giant and a diplomatic dwarf in the world in which the steadfast exercise of American power was needed more than ever before"⁵⁴ When viewing the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome in such terms, it is clear why many presidents and their administrations considered it as something that needed to be defeated if containment policy was to be successful. As America's cultural shift regarding war continued to spread throughout the masses, those in power began to notice the rifts in popular consensus towards containment policy.

While their study focuses primarily on the lack of agreement within the leadership of the U.S. government in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Holsti and Rosenau also examine the domestic constraints of the Vietnam War and its impact on American society. According to Holsti and Rosenau's research, some policymakers within the U.S. government began to blame Congressional interference as the sole failing attribute of the war. These policymakers, in turn, subscribed to the Vietnam Syndrome's secondary definition as an unnecessary restraint on U.S. foreign policy. Holsti and Rosenau continue to argue that others have linked the loss in Vietnam to general domestic divisions which ultimately eroded the U.S. ability to successfully win the war.⁵⁵ One example that Holsti and Rosenau discuss is the controversial relationship between the media and domestic support for the war. They argue that differing perspectives amongst policymakers varied between viewing the media as the only source for factual evidence

⁵⁴ Simons, *The Vietnam Syndrome*, 13.

⁵⁵ Holsti and Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs*, 45.

of the Vietnam War to the U.S public suspiciously viewing a historically deceptive U.S. government that insisted an end to the war was near. Views that the media contributed to the American defeat due to their broadcasted sensationalism and atrocious distortion of key events of the war led some in power, such as Henry Kissinger, to argue for media censorship since they considered the Vietnam War defeat to be a domestic conflict.⁵⁶ Holsti and Rosenau's research indicates that 69 percent of policymakers during the 1976 presidential year felt that the U.S. public's discontent with the war was driven by sensationalist media coverage of the war and 66 percent of them believed that pressure from domestic dissidents was a significant constraint on the U.S.⁵⁷ Many also believed that the media was the only source of truth for the American people. This research is significant to the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome and its effects on the America because it shows that as early as 1976, policymakers were aware of the domestic constraints created by public dissidents and the media about the war which was impacting traditional foreign policy.

Furthermore, Holsti and Rosenau point out that there were deep divisions in Congress, the media, and within American society and these divisions suggest that there were a significant number of policymakers who agreed that these domestic issues were a source of failure in Vietnam. Holsti and Rosenau's data supports the argument that those who championed a military victory in Vietnam were more willing to attribute domestic constraints to the loss of the war, whereas those who favored immediate withdrawal from Vietnam were less inclined to cite domestic issues.⁵⁸ In other words, policymakers who

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 38.

⁵⁸ Holsti and Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs*, 46.

avored a complete withdrawal from the war, according to the data, would be more inclined to focus on the negative domestic consequences of the war than the ones who favored a military victory.⁵⁹ As stated previously in the historiography, Holsti and Rosenau identified Semi-Isolationists as one of the conflicting groups of leaders who challenged U.S leadership. The emergence of the Semi-Isolationists encapsulated the shift in the U.S. public's collective cultural view of war.

Another lens through which to examine how the Vietnam War and the Vietnam Syndrome altered the U.S. public's collective cultural view of war is through the group that fueled the Vietnam Syndrome and in some opinions the loss of the Vietnam War – the media. The term Vietnam Syndrome become more popularly used within the media during three specific time periods. First in the mid-1970s, then in the early to mid-1980s, and lastly from 1991-1992. Each grouping correlates to events that occurred during each time period. Even though this thesis aims to examine the Vietnam Syndrome from its two distinct political definitions, it is important to note that the media first framed the Vietnam Syndrome in psychiatric terms. For example, one of the first times the Vietnam Syndrome was used within the media is in Eleanor Hoover's article, "Veterans Having Adjustments Woes," published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1976. Hoover's article was a response to the tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans re-entering civilian life. She mentioned the 'post-Vietnam Syndrome' as a concept that was first expressed by a New York Psychologist by the name of Chaim Shatan in 1972.⁶⁰ According to Shatan, "good

⁵⁹ Ibid., 56.

⁶⁰ Eleanor Hoover, "Veterans Having Adjustment Woes," *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1976.

Americans are turned into mass executioners as a result of the modern military training [...] the result being the unconsummated grief on the part of many soldiers which deprives them of any meaning in their current existence.”⁶¹ It is quite telling that one of the first times the Vietnam Syndrome was used in the media was in a psychological context. Hoover used the term in reference to veterans, however, veterans are American citizens reintroduced to society so despite their past identity as military personnel they are also counted among the collective U.S. public. This is significant because of the impact that the veteran’s anti-war movement had on the rise of the Vietnam Syndrome. It would not be a reach to claim that anti-war veterans played a significant role in altering the U.S. public’s collective cultural view of war away from interventionism and towards an anti-interventionist position, as will be discussed later in this chapter through post-Vietnam era films.⁶²

The next group of articles where the media began discussing the Vietnam Syndrome is at the beginning of the 1980s. Published in 1981, a *Los Angeles Times* excerpt titled, “Another War? Food for Thought” discussed President Reagan’s comments on the developments in El Salvador. President Reagan was quoted saying that any actions of his would be limited as “part of the Vietnam Syndrome [even though he claimed that] we have no intentions of that kind of involvement.”⁶³ Opposing President Reagan’s sentiments, the author notes that within the “White House press room [...] humor cracked that in 10 years we’ll have 60,000 American casualties and 50 El

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² See the Vietnam Veteran’s Against the War, <http://www.vvaw.org/about/>.

⁶³ *Los Angeles Times*, “Another War? Food for Thought,” March 4, 1981.

Salvadorian restaurants in Arlington.”⁶⁴ Outside of the racist implications, this particular article revealed the high level of skepticism that the public held towards the Reagan administration’s ability to restrain itself and keep the U.S. out of another foreign quagmire. This article further exposed the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome that flared up when President Reagan and his administration began to step up U.S. intervention in El Salvador – a topic that will be explored in depth in chapter two. Continuing to make news, the Vietnam Syndrome was mentioned once again in connection with veterans, this time linking memories of the Vietnam War to renewed feelings of isolationism.

In the article, “Remembering Veterans, Forgetting a War,” published in the *Los Angeles Times* in June of 1981, Philip Geyelin commented on how the poor attendance rate at the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day Service, a mere 50 seats filled of the 500 chairs set up, mirrored the national mood.⁶⁵ Geyelin directly referred to the Vietnam Syndrome by remarking on “the conventional wisdom [of] the mood of America, in general, and about public attitudes toward war and peace (the so-called Vietnam syndrome) in particular.”⁶⁶ Moreover, Geyelin criticized the chosen speaker for the service, Ellsworth Bunker, the former U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, for embodying the establishment while Vietnam veterans were for the most part anti-establishment. However, Geyelin did credit Bunker’s ability to remain sensitive to the perils of the war while still supporting the war’s original intent. Geyelin quotes Bunker as saying “a war new to American experience [...] conventional and guerilla [...] political

⁶⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, “Another War? Food for Thought.”

⁶⁵ Philip Geyelin, “Remembering Veterans, Forgetting a War,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 1981.

⁶⁶ Geyelin, “Remembering Veterans, Forgetting a War.”

and psychological [...] limited by restraints we imposed upon ourselves.”⁶⁷ In closing, Geyelin observed how the choice words vocalized and those withheld from the service emulated how the country felt about itself and its role in the world nearly a decade after the trauma of Vietnam.⁶⁸ Continuing to frame the Vietnam Syndrome within a psychological context, while also capturing a nation battling to respect those who lost the war while simultaneously erasing the mistakes of the past, Geyelin provides a clear view of how the Vietnam Syndrome impacted the national mood.

In his article, “Public’s Attention Returns to Issues of War and Peace,” published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1983, Doyle McManus shifted the conversation back towards America’s push for isolationism and highlighted the U.S. public’s realization of their unique American dualist perspective. He argues that the post-Vietnam polls revealed an American majority looking inward towards domestic affairs rather than the next foreign adventure financed by increased defense spending.⁶⁹ In his work, McManus states that the Vietnam Syndrome had endured due to America’s reticence towards U.S. intervention in regional and global conflicts, and many Americans, he claims, are increasingly skeptical of presidential claims that the regional and global conflicts are vital to U.S. security.⁷⁰ McManus adhered to the media's recent historic trend by reiterating the lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on the American public’s collective cultural view of war towards an isolationist stance. He highlighted America’s realization of their unique

⁶⁷ Geyelin, “Remembering Veterans, Forgetting a War.”

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Doyle McManus, “Public’s Attention Returns to Issues of War and Peace,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 20, 1983.

⁷⁰ McManus, “Public’s Attention Returns to Issues of War and Peace.”

dualism by stating that "The U.S. public's view of the world has rested on these two contradictory impulses ever since World War II: Americans want the United States to be respected as the strongest nation on earth and, at the same time, they want to avoid any involvement in war."⁷¹ By not only providing evidence of the continued effect of the Vietnam Syndrome on America's collective cultural view of war but by also examining the U.S. public's realization of their uniquely American dualist perspective, McManus established the legitimacy of the Vietnam Syndrome. The last cluster of articles demonstrating the media's return to the Vietnam Syndrome began in March of 1991, mere months after the initiation of Operation Desert Storm.

Two articles referring to the Vietnam Syndrome were published in the *Los Angeles Times* just days apart from one other on March 8th and March 11th of 1991. The first of these two articles, titled "Not So Fast into the Iraq Syndrome," written by Todd Gitlin, harkened back to the source of the Vietnam Syndrome when he suggested that instead of an Iraq Syndrome, why not just have no more Iraq's? He clarified his position by stating "Meaning, no more tilts towards dictators of choice, no more reliance on gun sales as Americans-or anyone else's [...] finally, no more fantasies that Patriots and Tomahawks can save us from the sins of appeasement."⁷² Gitlin's position in 1991 is a direct response to the aggressive major military interventionism in the Gulf as well as a criticism of how the Reagan and Bush administrations conducted business under the limitations of the Vietnam Syndrome. Gitlin solidified his point further by stating,

⁷¹ McManus, "Public's Attention Returns to Issues of War and Peace."

⁷² Todd Gitlin, "Not So Fast into the Iraq Syndrome," *Los Angeles Time*, March 8, 1991.

The so-called Vietnam Syndrome—so named President Reagan as if it were a disease—was always more a disposition than a position: a disposition against war as an extension of foreign policy. This was no simple mood, but a compound of moral and practical assessments. The moral feeling was that America wasn't entitled to throw its weight around the world, the practical was that America shouldn't enter wars it couldn't win.⁷³

Gitlin claims that President Reagan believed that the Vietnam Syndrome was a disease and as such, in need of eradication. President Reagan and President H.W. Bush both gave the impression that the Vietnam Syndrome needed to be eradicated because it all but eliminated intervention as a fundamental part of the foreign policy which ultimately undercut their ability to contain Soviet expansion via containment policy. From Gitlin's point of view, it appears that the Vietnam Syndrome had continued to linger into the 1990s. The next article, however, depicts a weakening of the Vietnam Syndrome since the U.S. had appeared to have forgotten its lessons from the war.

In his article, "Unlimited Violence Wins Out," Alexander Cockburn argues that despite President H.W. Bush's praise of the U.S. military's swift action in the Gulf, if the American public were to know the extent of the killing ordered by President H.W. Bush, he could never have claimed that the country had put the Vietnam Syndrome behind itself.⁷⁴ Cockburn argues that the real message to understand from the action in

⁷³ Gitlin, "Not So Fast into the Iraq Syndrome."

⁷⁴ Alexander Cockburn, "Unlimited Violence Wins Out," *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 1991.

the Gulf is that the lessons of Vietnam have now been unlearned and what pays most is the exercise of violence without limit, instead of believing the claim that the Vietnam Syndrome was beaten.⁷⁵ The significance of Cockburn's argument is that he recognized the initiation of Operation Desert Storm as a return to major U.S. military intervention, yet in doing so, failed to prevent the massacre of Kurds in the north and Sunni in the northwest by their neighbor, Iraq. Similar to Klare, Cockburn took a humanist approach by requesting his readers to take action regarding these violent issues; specifically, by sending money to the International Committee of the Red Cross labeled for the victims of the Gulf War.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, the first cluster of reports about the Vietnam Syndrome by the media immediately associated the Vietnam Syndrome with psychiatric terms. The second cluster of articles published in the early 1980s represented a response to the heightened fear of potential further intervention in Central America and the Middle East and revealed the U.S. public's favor of adopting an isolationist view towards foreign policy. The articles of the 1980s also demonstrated the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome in altering America's collective cultural view of war as a fundamental part of U.S. foreign policy. The third and final cluster of articles emerged as a response to the beginning of the Persian Gulf War and focused on the discussion of whether or not the Vietnam Syndrome had been 'kicked' from the U.S. public's collective memory after the success of the Persian Gulf War. Derived from the representation of the Vietnam Syndrome within the media, it is evident that the country's collective cultural view of war had been altered to favor an anti-interventionist stance in policy; and, in an effort to

⁷⁵ Ibid.

reverse the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on the U.S public, the government and Hollywood worked together to rewrite the script of the Vietnam War.

Interest Groups and the U.S. Public

Similar to the breakdown in consensus amongst Congress members on how to best conduct foreign policy during the post-Vietnam era, there was a similar lack of consensus within the U.S. public on how to respond to the Vietnam War. The media, for the most part, followed the majority of the U.S. public's view in representing the Vietnam Syndrome as a necessary restriction on U.S. foreign policy that prevented the U.S. from implementing interventionist strategies within foreign countries that could draw the U.S. into another quagmire. However, there were other interest groups that followed a different narrative. For example, religious communities throughout America differed in how they responded to the Vietnam War and the Vietnam Syndrome. Grasping how these different interest groups responded to the Vietnam War is vital because it is these different interest groups that were later on persuaded by the different rhetorical message of presidential administrations to shift the culture of war back towards intervention.

Interest groups like religious organizations were especially susceptible to presidential rhetoric due to the good versus evil narrative that surrounded the Cold War – notably, that America was on the side of God, doing God's work to rid the world of the atheistic evils of Communism. According to Jill K. Gill's article "Religious Communities and the Vietnam War," most religious communities fell into four distinct camps when referring to the Vietnam War. The first of the religious groups can be referred to as religious crusaders, who deemed the war as good and urged all necessary means to ensure

victory. They viewed the Vietnam War in large part as a spiritual crusade against Satan's scheme to control the world. The second camp, the religious nationalists, supported America's Vietnam policy, especially when presidents asked them to, but contrary to the religious crusaders, were not as militaristic and did not demand that the war be won at all costs. The third religious camp, religious dissenters, viewed the policies implemented during the war as misguided, unjust, and immoral, similar to the sentiments of the majority of the U.S. public. Lastly, the fourth camp, the pacifists, viewed all war as ungodly and mirrored similar sentiments as the religious dissenters.⁷⁶ Due to the differences in religious interpretations of the war, presidents and their administration were able to capitalize on these specific groups and gain traction against the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome.

As the Cold War began to heat up in the late 1970s through the early 1980s, tough-on-communism rhetoric influenced a boom in neoconservative religious camps such as religious nationals, which became a foundation of the Republican Party. According to Gill,

When Ronald Reagan became president in 1980, in part by wooing religious nationalist voters, he helped resurrect and confirm the crusaders' explanations for the war's failure. Along with bitter generals such as Westmoreland, Reagan implied that America could have won had the military's hands been untied by the weak-kneed politicians who lacked the will to stay the

⁷⁶ Jill K. Gill, "Religious Communities and the Vietnam War," in *Vietnam War Era: People and Perspectives*, ed. Mitchell K. Hall and Peter C. Mancall, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009): 97.

course. He also demonized dissenters as traitorous and the media as sellouts.

These interpretations, which ignored historical evidence, have become mainstream in part because religious nationalists adopted them, too.⁷⁷

By capitalizing on the divisiveness of religious camps over the Vietnam War, presidents such as Reagan, were able to convince the rising number of neoconservative voters, especially conservative evangelicals, to support a more interventionist approach towards American foreign policy. In fact, towards the end of Reagan's presidency in 1988, religious conservative Jerry Falwell, founder of Moral Majority, told the press that, "Ronald Reagan saved the country."⁷⁸ By understanding that even though the majority of the U.S. public's view of the Vietnam War and the Vietnam Syndrome mirrored the media's, there was, like in Congress, a lack of consensus amongst varying interests groups that allowed, as will be explored in chapter two, presidents and their administrations to use different rhetorical messages to shift the U.S. public's culture of war back towards a policy of intervention.

The Vietnam Syndrome And Popular Culture: Rewriting The Script Of The Vietnam War

A subtle way the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on America can be observed is through the plethora of films about the Vietnam War that were produced during the post-Vietnam era from 1975-1991. One first notes the quantity of war movies produced, and

⁷⁷ Gill, "Religious Communities and the Vietnam War," 114.

⁷⁸ D.K. Williams. "Reagan's Religious Right: The Unlikely Alliance between Southern Evangelicals and a California Conservative," in *Ronald Reagan and the 1980s: Perceptions, Policies, Legacies*, ed. Cheryl Hudson and Gareth Davies (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan 2008) 137.

second, recognizes the distinction between the realist and revisionist portrayals of the Vietnam War, which can be perceived as a reflection of how the U.S. public and government reacted to the lasting legacy of the Vietnam War over time. As part of his objective to eradicate the Vietnam Syndrome, President Reagan sought to capitalize on Hollywood's dual narrative by endorsing revisionist narrative movies such as *Rambo*, as a means to try and rewrite the script of the Vietnam War and sway public opinion. By examining the significant number of movies that were produced during the post-Vietnam era, it is evident that America had not quite forgotten the trauma of Vietnam.

The well-known saying, 'art reflects culture,' resonates in the case of post-Vietnam era movies. During the post-Vietnam era, at least twenty-four movies were produced that centered on the Vietnam War.⁷⁹ This figure equates to 1.5 movies per year that were produced from 1975 to 1991. The production of nearly two movies per year for over a decade and a half is an indicator of a society consumed with the lasting narrative of the Vietnam War and represents a culture unwilling to forget their failure in Vietnam. Not only were there a significant number of movies produced during the post-Vietnam War era, but many of these movies continued to significantly influence the U.S. public well after the post-Vietnam era. Mirroring the division in Congress, as well as society, Hollywood reflected the interventionist vs. anti-interventionist narrative by making movies that either followed a revisionist narrative or a realist narrative of the war. Movies like *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Platoon* (1986), *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), and *Born On the 4th of July* (1989) followed the realist narrative, whereas movies such as the *Rambo*

⁷⁹ Carl Boggs and Tom Pollard, *The Hollywood War Machine: U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 64-92. *Chapter four discusses over twenty-four different titles that relate to the Vietnam War and the Vietnam Syndrome.

trilogy (1982, 1985, 1988), *Missing in Action* (1984, 1985, 1988), and *White Ghost* (1988) represented the revisionist narrative. Unlike the realist narrative, which tried to capture the true feelings, emotions, and trauma of the Vietnam War on film, the revisionist narrative sought to reshape the narrative of the Vietnam War into the way the U.S. thought it should have played out. These post-Vietnam era movies illustrated the division between the U.S. public's anti-interventionist position and the U.S. government's interventionist strategy of containment.

Realist Narrative

Following the realist narrative, movies such as *Apocalypse Now*, *Platoon*, and *Full Metal Jacket* represent the reality of the Vietnam War and help explain why the U.S. public adopted a more anti-interventionist position during the post-Vietnam era. *Apocalypse Now*, starring Hollywood super-stars Martin Sheen, Marlon Brando, and Robert Duvall, was the first of the realist narrative movies to largely impact the American populace. Released on August 2, 1979, the blockbuster depicts a senseless war without tangible goals or objectives. The plot follows Martin Sheen's character, Captain Willard, on a mission upriver to assassinate an AWOL decorated colonel. On his travels, Willard witnesses the mass bombing of villages and listens to Duvall's character, Lt. Colonel Kilgore, utter the iconic line, "I love the smell of Napalm in the morning."⁸⁰ Willard recognizes the growing credibility gap when he remarks, "The war is being run by a bunch of four-star clowns who were going to end up giving the circus away."⁸¹ These sentiments were not just a reflection of the soldiers on the front lines, but were a

⁸⁰ *Apocalypse Now*, DVD, directed by Francis Ford Coppola (1979; USA: Lionsgate).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

reflection of the U.S. public's perception of how their government had handled the war. *Apocalypse Now* reflects the realist narrative mostly through the portrayal of Brando's character, Colonel Walter E. Kurtz, the AWOL colonel who had abandoned his post. In a speech to an imprisoned Willard, Kurtz relayed a particular horror the Vietnam War had wrought when he recalled returning to a village where he had just inoculated children and describes how "they had [...] hacked off every inoculated arm. There they were in a pile. A pile of little arms. And I remember...I...I cried. I wept like some grandmother. I wanted to tear my teeth out."⁸² This type of raw imagery that the realist narrative offered resonated with America; the pain and regret played out on screen validated the emotions that fueled America's disinclination towards intervention.

Furthering Hollywood's realist narrative, *Platoon*, released on December 24, 1986, portrayed the emotions of the American soldier during the Vietnam War, and highlighted the divide between the volunteers and those who were drafted. Early in the film, Charlie Sheen's character, Chris Taylor, felt, as many did early in the war, that he would "Do his fair share for his country. Live up to what my grandpa did in the first war, and dad did in the second."⁸³ His sense of obligation faded the longer he spent in the jungle, however, as he began to realize how the war was becoming more inhuman and lawless. In sweeping through a village, Tom Berenger's character, Sergeant Barnes, kills an innocent civilian woman in cold blood and then proceeded to take a man's child at gun point in order to make the man admit they were Vietcong members.⁸⁴ Willem Dafoe's character, Sergeant Elias, stepped in to hold Sergeant Barnes accountable for his actions

⁸² *Apocalypse Now*, DVD.

⁸³ *Platoon*, DVD, directed by Oliver Stone (1986; USA: MGM).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

and threatened that an investigation would prove his unauthorized killings. Shortly after their altercation, Sergeant Barnes ordered the village to be burned, an act that was commonly practiced during the Vietnam War.⁸⁵ After viewing the raw violence and psychological torment of the Vietnam War on film, notably the inhumane acts that were uncomfortably grounded in reality, it comes as no surprise that a U.S. public that had been taught to believe that America represented law, justice, freedom, and humanitarianism would lean towards an anti-interventionist posture in terms of U.S. foreign policy.

Full Metal Jacket, released on June 26, 1987, took a slightly different approach to portraying the realist narrative that also significantly impacted the general public. Providing comic relief in the over-dramatization of boot camp, *Full Metal Jacket* deviated from the hard-hitting imagery in earlier films. Focusing more on the media portrayal of the war, the movie follows Matthew Modine's character, Private Joker, and his camera man, Rafterman, played by Kevyn Major Howard, for the military newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*. What Private Joker discovers instead is that the military has been spin-doctoring propaganda pieces about the war and covering up the fact that soldiers have been killing entire villages seemingly without remorse; in one scene, Private Joker reports the mass killing of nearly twenty villagers dumped in a mass grave covered in lime.⁸⁶ He also interviews other soldiers about their feelings on the war and several soldiers admitted to having serious questions about the war, with one soldier even

⁸⁵ Peter Arnett, "Grime Decision for Military: 'It Became Necessary to Destroy Town to Save It,'" *The Danville Register* (February 8, 1968).

⁸⁶ *Full Metal Jacket*, DVD, directed by Stanley Kubrick (1987; USA: Warner Bros.).

quoting President Johnson's famous 'Vietnamization' reference to encapsulate his feelings.⁸⁷ Towards the end of the film, *Full Metal Jacket*, depicts the raw violence and psychological trauma similar to previous realist narrative films, including the scene in which Private Joker made the decision to kill the sniper who had already killed three members of their squad and was bleeding to death.⁸⁸ Realist narratives such as *Full Metal Jacket* offered realistic images of combat while stripping away the usually censored representation of Hollywood's portrayal of warfare in combat movies, making their effects on the U.S. public even more persuasive.⁸⁹ Bringing the realist narrative home, Hollywood moved from the realist portrayal of the battlefield to the reality of life as an injured veteran returned home from a war that society wished to forget.

Bringing more fame and notoriety to the realist narrative, Tom Cruise starred in the biographical film *Born On the 4th of July*, released to theaters on December 20th, 1989. Cruise plays Ron Kovic a quadriplegic former Marine of the Vietnam War. *Born On the 4th of July* depicts Ron's journey from being a Marine, to becoming handicapped, turning to protest, and ultimately becoming an activist. His journey begins as a young boy in high school where he uses his family connection to the military as his reason to volunteer for Vietnam. Kovic states, "What's the matter with you anyway? You served, Uncle Bob served, don't you remember what President Kennedy said? There is not going to be an America anymore unless there are people willing to sacrifice. I love my country,

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Boggs and Pollard, *The Hollywood War Machine*, 69.

dad.”⁹⁰ To which his mom replies, “You are doing the right thing Ronnie. Communism has to be stopped. It’s God’s will you go.”⁹¹ Shortly afterwards, Kovic is deployed to Vietnam where he and his platoon raid a village but are ambushed. When forced to retreat, and using the villagers as cover, Kovic, in the chaos and confusion of battle, accidentally killed a fellow retreating Marine. He reports what he had done in shock and is told to report back to his station.

Jumping to January of 1968, Kovic and his platoon are once again ambushed near a village but this time Kovic is shot in the ankle. Unable to move, Kovic tries to stay and fight but is overwhelmed. Shot in the right chest, Kovic is rescued by a fellow Marine and medevacked to a medical tent where he is read his last rights. Kovic is saved however, and ends up in a poorly funded, rat infested, Veterans Affairs hospital in the Bronx, New York. He was poorly treated and forced to not only live in his own feces for days due to lack of care, but would often go days without food or water as well.⁹² Watching on T.V. as the protests turn from anti-war to anti-military, Kovic and other veterans began to see once they returned home how negatively everyone felt about the war in Vietnam. Kovic realizes that he is not alone in his transformation from a patriotic and God-fearing soldier to a disabled veteran to ultimately realizing that he had committed numerous human rights violations during his stint as soldier. Instead of allowing those within Congress and the U.S public to demonize Vietnam veterans, Kovic advocated for their help and support through anti-war protests. Concluding the film, Kovic prepares to address the nation at the 1976 Democratic National Convention in New York

⁹⁰ *Born On the 4th of July*, DVD, directed by Oliver Stone (1989; USA: Universal Studios).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Born On the 4th of July*, DVD.

City bringing Veterans Affairs to the forefront of political debate. *Born On the 4th of July* not only follows the realist narrative through its depictions of the horrors and consequences of the Vietnam War, but also focuses on the reality and perspective of the veteran. Nevertheless, just as major Hollywood actors portrayed the realist narrative screen, just as many star-studded casts represented the revisionist narrative of the Vietnam War.

Revisionist Narrative

Counteracting the realist narrative, the revisionist narrative within Hollywood grew out of the desire to rewrite the losing narrative of Vietnam War to a narrative that framed America's triumphant return. Many within the U.S. government, especially presidents and their administrations, felt that the Vietnam Syndrome was an unacceptable restraint on their ability to conduct foreign policy in matters of national security interests such as containment. That is why Hollywood dispatched actors such as Chuck Norris and Sylvester Stallone to rematch an enemy that after a decade, had become entrenched within American film as just as fanatical as America's World War II enemies.⁹³ Released in tandem with one and other, the two biggest revisionist narrative movies, the *Rambo* trilogy starring Sylvester Stallone, and the *Missing in Action* trilogy, starring Chuck Norris, both meant to challenge the notion of a torn, wounded America. Best encapsulating America's emergence from the ashes of the war was Sylvester Stallone's personification of the fictional character, Rambo.

⁹³ Joseph Lelyveld, "The Enduring Legacy," *New York Time Magazine*, March 31, 1985, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/world/asia/033185vietnam-mag.html> (accessed May 1, 2019).

Sylvester Stallone carried forward the revisionist narrative through the superhero-like one-man army as John Rambo in *Rambo: First Blood* released on October 1, 1982. Depicted throughout the film and what became a running theme throughout the trilogy, Stallone embodied the ideal that many desired for the outcome of the Vietnam War – a triumphant show of force that unequivocally defeats the enemy in a decisive victory for justice. After being wrongfully convicted for murdering a police officer and resisting arrest, Stallone’s character got the chance, to redeem himself in *Rambo: First Blood II*. Released on May 22, 1985, Rambo was released from jail on special orders to gather intelligence on POW camps in Vietnam. The addition of the POW/MIA narrative is significant because many Americans believed with a devout and popular conviction that more than 2,400 MIA soldiers remained in Vietnam and Laos.⁹⁴ From Richard Crenna’s character, Trautman, telling Rambo, “John, I want you to try and forget the war, remember the mission, the old Vietnam is dead,” to the iconic electric torture scene, where Rambo suffered excruciating torture at the hands of the Russians without turning on his country which had deserted him, *Rambo: First Blood II* epitomized the revisionist narrative.⁹⁵ Rambo’s commitment to service and overcoming the stacked odds, while redeeming himself for the original loss of the war, is the exact narrative that presidents and their administrations wanted from the Vietnam War, establishing Rambo as a key symbol for America’s recovery from the war. Adding to the revisionist narrative movies, another big-name star entered the arena to rewrite the script of the Vietnam War.

⁹⁴ Lelyveld, “The Enduring Legacy.”

⁹⁵ *Rambo: First Blood II*, DVD, directed by Paul P. Cosmatos (1985; USA: Lionsgate).

Chuck Norris, in the *Missing in Action* trilogy, adhered to the same Vietnam narrative of rescuing POW's like the *Rambo* trilogy. *Missing in Action*, released on November 16, 1984, follows the story of Chuck Norris' character, Colonel James Braddock, a former Vietnam POW who had escaped, similar to Rambo, and his drive to return to Vietnam in order to right the POW issue. Adding more action and firefights, the opening scene depicting Braddock running through mortar fire, taking out enemy Vietcong and saving fallen soldiers, to the scene where Braddock stands up to General Tran, played by James Hong, in a formal diplomatic hearing, *Missing in Action* remains true to the revisionist narrative.⁹⁶ The symbolism of the U.S. standing strong in the face of their enemy could be one take away message from *Missing in Action* conveyed through Braddock's character. Sylvester Stallone and Chuck Norris both brought fame and notoriety to the revisionist narrative message, but there were numerous other revisionist Vietnam War films that continued to challenge the lingering effects of the Vietnam Syndrome.

Adhering to the familiar abandoned POW/MIA soldier narrative, William Katt plays Lt. Steve Shepard in *White Ghost*, released on November 18, 1988. Lt. Steve Shepard is a U.S. special forces operator who went MIA during the Vietnam War. He was given the nickname, the White Ghost, throughout Indochina since he presumably moved throughout the forests collecting the souls of American soldiers who would never return home. While Shepard remained within the forests of Vietnam, he found a wife and had a child on the way when a border war broke out forcing Shepard to contact his old unit for an extraction. Of course, due to the Vietnam Syndrome, many did not want to

⁹⁶ *Missing in Action*, DVD, directed by James Bruner (1984; USA: MGM).

openly admit to the rumors of the potential thousands of MIA/POW soldiers trapped in Vietnam. To many, the wounds of Vietnam needed to be healed, not reopened by going back in to save those left behind. This is evident by the way the movie handled Shepard's extraction from Vietnam. Once Shepard's message "Two to be extracted" was received, a panel of military and intelligent officers responded, "Two prisoners of war?" which was met with the panel's reply, "Survivors at this point in time are not going to make us look good."⁹⁷ After some deliberation, Major Cross (Reb Brown) decided to send Shepard's former commanding officer Waco, and Waco's mercenary team to extract Shepard, unaware of the fact that Shepard and Waco had a falling out over Waco's orders to kill an entire village during the war. Once that fact eventually came to light, Major Cross recognized the gravity of the situation and flew to Vietnam himself to quietly handle the situation.

When Major Cross lands in Vietnam he is promptly met by a U.S. diplomat concerned about his charter of a private helicopter ride. The U.S. diplomat says, "I can't let you jeopardize what is already a delicate political situation. Major, there are no Americans alive in Vietnam. Have you got that?" Major Cross replies, "No, sir." Where the diplomat replies, "Damn it, it's over now. It's old news. Nobody believes that shit anymore," Major Cross responds with, "I still do."⁹⁸ This scene reveals that there was pressure within Congress to forget the military and leave men behind in order to end the suffering of the nation. However, despite those beliefs, there were still people like Major Cross who believed in 'no man left behind.' In true heroic fashion, Shepard slowly takes

⁹⁷ *White Ghost*, DVD, directed by BJ Davis (1988; USA: Gibraltar).

⁹⁸ *White Ghost*, DVD.

out Waco's mercenaries who had marked him for dead, battles his way through a Vietcong POW camp to save his wife and unborn child, finally defeats Waco, and bravely carries his wife to a helicopter from which Major Cross jumps out firing two machine guns at the Vietcong, providing cover for Shepard and his wife. Once in the helicopter, Shepard hands Major Cross the pile of dog tags from fallen America soldiers he had collected and Major Cross welcomes him home. *White Ghost* epitomizes several distinct characteristics of the revisionist narrative films: a narrative in which America got the chance to quietly and successfully complete the objective to rescue all prisoners of war, confront injustice, and emerge as the gun-toting savior who arrives in the final hour to end the war the way it should have ended all along. Channeling that image to the core, sitting U.S. president at the time, Ronald Regan, capitalized on this revisionist narrative by openly supporting the symbolic representation of America's redemption through the revisionist narrative.

President Ronald Reagan and the U.S. Public: An Anti-Communist Hollywood

Winning the 1980 presidential election on the premise that he and his administration would be tough on communism, President Reagan needed all the help he could get to defeat the restrictive and lingering effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. One way in which President Reagan and his administration influenced the U.S. public's collective cultural view of war away from the anti-interventionist position to a powerful, freedom-fighting machine-like Rambo, was to endorse the very image that the administration was trying to convey. In a speech given by President Reagan in May of 1988, he personally endorsed the *Rambo* trilogy by stating,

In a few weeks, a new movie comes out called Rambo III. You remember in the first Rambo, he took over a town, in the second he single-handedly defeated several communist armies, and now in the third Rambo film, they say he really gets tough. Almost makes me wish I could serve a third term.⁹⁹

President Reagan's personal endorsement of the *Rambo* trilogy is significant for a couple of reasons. First, by endorsing the revisionist narrative, President Reagan continued his eradication of the Vietnam Syndrome on the American public's collective view of war. Second, it provides an explanation into President Reagan foreign policy decisions which will be discussed at length in chapter two. President Reagan not only personally endorsed the *Rambo* trilogy, but he also received a signed *Rambo II* promotional poster from Sylvester Stallone. At a State Republican Fundraising dinner in Los Angeles, California in 1985, Stallone personally gave President Reagan the framed promotional poster with the inscription, "To President Reagan, best of life, and all the best for the future."¹⁰⁰ President Reagan released a statement saying, "I saw Rambo last night, and next time I'll know what to do."¹⁰¹ Not only does this show that President Reagan had actually seen the movies, but it shows that he approved of Rambo's methods.

⁹⁹ Ronald Reagan, *Signed Rambo Poster*, from Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, May 1988, video clip, 1:01 min., <https://www.reaganfoundation.org/programs-events/webcasts-and-podcasts/podcasts/videocasts/monday-minute-signed-rambo-poster/> (accessed September 9, 2019)

¹⁰⁰ Reagan, *Signed Rambo Poster*.

¹⁰¹ Gregory A. Waller, "Rambo: Getting To Win This Time," in *From Hanoi To Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*, ed. Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 125.

This type of action was not uncommon for President Reagan as his time as president of the Screen Actors Guild in the late 1940s. In his role as president of the Screen Actors Guild in Hollywood, Ronald Reagan was at the forefront of keeping communism out of mainstream Hollywood. In 1947, he was summoned to testify before Congress on October 20th in connection with the Committee on Un-American Activities about his understanding of the communist influence on the motion picture industry.¹⁰² Reagan's integrity, prior to the subpoena, was called into question in connection to some old leftist ties, until a memo was sent throughout the Committee on Un-American Activities clearing his name of any communist connection or affiliations. The memo read, "I happen to have been raised in the same town with Reagan, and know him very well [...] he will go to Washington if we request him to do so."¹⁰³ In a transcript of his testimony to Congress, Reagan was asked by Congressman Stripling what steps, if any, were needed to be taken to rid the motion-picture industry of any communist influence. Reagan replied,

We have done a pretty good job in our business of keeping those people's activities curtailed. [...] we have exposed their lies when we came across them, we have opposed their propaganda, and I can certainly testify that in the case of the Screen Actors Guild we have been eminently successful in preventing them, with

¹⁰² *Press Release from the Committee on Un-American Activities*, U.S. House of Representatives (September 19, 1947), <https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/51313/red-scare.pdf> (accessed July 15, 2019).

¹⁰³ *Memo Ronald Reagan from the Committee on Un-American Activities*, U.S. House of Representatives (September 2, 1947), <https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/51313/red-scare.pdf> (accessed July 15, 2019).

their usual tactics, trying to run a majority of an organization with a well-organized minority.¹⁰⁴

From his early days as president of the Screen Actors Guild to his tenure in office as president of the United States, Ronald Reagan used his influence to combat communism both at home and abroad.

President Reagan's congressional testimony is significant in that it reveals how he and others within the film industry were actively preventing and hindering communist rhetoric and propaganda from entering the mainstream media, and it highlights how the motion-picture industry can be influenced and manipulated by political agendas. This thesis offers evidence for the similarities apparent in Hollywood and shown by President Reagan capitalizing and profiting from the revisionist narrative. In President Reagan's case, the revisionist narrative attempted to rewrite the detrimental narrative of the Vietnam War into a triumphant American epic which was an effective rhetorical device to eradicate the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome.

¹⁰⁴ *Ronald Reagan and Albert Maltz Testimony before the Committee on Un-American Activities*, U.S. House of Representatives (October 21, 1947), <https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/51313/red-scare.pdf> (accessed July 15, 2019).

Chapter One Conclusion

Within this chapter, there are several distinct areas within which the Vietnam Syndrome and its effects are studied. The first area of consideration is in the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome itself and the effect on the U.S. public. The second area is the Vietnam Syndrome and its representation within popular culture. The third area of exploration is how the uniquely American syndrome altered the people's cultural view of war away from the policy of containment and towards a policy of isolation. Outlining key events that contributed to the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome and how it impacted the U.S. public and foreign and domestic policy decisions are important for two distinct reasons. First, it establishes what the Vietnam Syndrome is, how it was created, and what its long-term effects were. Second, it establishes the Vietnam Syndrome as something that was created by the American populace and viewed as a limitation to those in leadership, following the Vietnam Syndrome's dual meanings.

By tracing the Vietnam Syndrome through media reports from a variety of different times periods throughout the post-Vietnam era, a clear picture emerges on how the Vietnam Syndrome continued to linger throughout the entirety of the post-Vietnam era. Between 1975 and 1991 the U.S. public held the majority view that the U.S. should refrain from intervening in developing world conflicts. The adoption of this isolationist policy by the U.S public indicates a shift from the previous collective psycho-cultural view of war away from the policy of containment which led the U.S. into both the Korean and the Vietnam War, and ultimately, towards the isolationist policy propagated by the Vietnam Syndrome. It is also important to establish this shift within the collect psycho-cultural view of war within the populace because it shows that this change created

significant restraints on presidents and their administration's ability to conduct foreign policy in accordance with containment policy, prompting them to label the Vietnam Syndrome as something that needed to be eradicated. It should come as no surprise that this combative narrative within the U.S. culture was mirrored within the U.S. popular culture in the form of Hollywood movies. The combating narratives of the Vietnam Syndrome during the post-Vietnam era was represented in the realist vs revisionist narratives that Hollywood portrayed in its movies. More popular amongst the U.S. public, the realist narrative represented in movies like *Apocalypse Now* and *Platoon* battled against the revisionist narratives of *Rambo* and *Missing In Action*, the latter of which were capitalized on by both Hollywood and those in power – more specifically by President Reagan. By endorsing the revisionist Rambo narrative, President Reagan appeared to have capitalized on the persuasive symbolism and rhetorical value that the revisionist narrative embodied, as a means to try and rewrite the script of the Vietnam War to combat the restraining effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on containment policy and his staunch anti-communist rhetoric. Serving as the focal point of chapter two, this thesis further examines how U.S. presidents during the post-Vietnam era used different rhetorical messages to defeat the aforementioned effects of the Vietnam Syndrome.

CHAPTER TWO: PRESIDENTS, THEIR RHETORIC, AND CHALLENGING THE
ANTI-INTERVENTIONIST EFFECTS OF THE VIETNAM SYNDROME ON U.S.
FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS

From the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome to the widening credibility gap, the anti-war movement and various other events outlined in chapter one changed the U.S. public's view of war. Altering the American populace's collective cultural view of war towards one of anti-intervention challenged the established Cold War foreign policy agenda of containment, depriving presidents, their administrations, and Congress of a consensus on foreign policy. That is why post-Vietnam-era presidents and their administrations implemented different rhetorical messages to unshackle, in their view, the incarcerating effects of the Vietnam Syndrome from foreign policy decisions. If presidents and their administrations wanted to defeat the Soviets with containment policy, they would have to carefully frame their rhetorical messages according to the public's opinion while simultaneously trying to challenge the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome.

The first of the post-Vietnam era presidents, Gerald R. Ford, held the unique responsibility of presiding over the conclusion of the Vietnam War. President Ford's dual rhetorical message of addressing the wounds of the war while presenting the United States as a strong united force committed to its global responsibilities was his administration's attempt to challenge the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. President Ford's dual message did not last long however, since by the time of

President Jimmy Carter's inauguration in January 1977, the U.S. had once again assumed the role of mediator of peace and freedom. Focusing on brokering peace in the Middle East between Egypt and Israel, President Carter sought to rebrand America's international image as the humanitarian peace brokers of the world. By the end of the decade, however, the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan, threatening the security of Persian Gulf oil, and the Iran-Iraq War rapidly escalated on both sides indicating that the Cold War was heating up in the new theater of the Middle East.

Winning the 1980 election on the foundation of being tough on communism, President Ronald Reagan's covert intervention in the Soviet-Afghan War appeased the growing concerns of communist influence within the Middle East. From his re-election in 1984 until he left office in 1989, President Reagan's maverick-like persona led him and his administration to act outside of Congress to protect the security of the western hemisphere from communist insurgencies within Central America. The Reagan administration acted outside of Congress in an effort to not only support his tough stance on communism, but also to challenge the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. From President Ford to President Reagan, post-Vietnam-era presidents and their administrations were able to challenge the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome by using different rhetorical messages supported by each presidential administration's foreign policy objectives. The first rhetorical strategy used to challenge the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome was President Ford's dual rhetorical message.

President Gerald Ford: The Tale of Two Narratives

President Ford, inaugurated on August 9, 1974, inherited a deeply divided and skeptical nation experiencing the lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. President Ford was primarily concerned with addressing the domestic issues created by the fallout of the war but wanted to do so from a position of strength. In other words, his rhetoric needed to acknowledge the wounds of the nation and simultaneously display the strength of the state of the union. President Ford had to frame his rhetoric on both domestic and foreign policy issues within a dual narrative that was aided by his deliberate continued détente with the Soviet Union. As a means of furthering détente with the Soviet Union, President Ford signed both the Vladivostok Accords in November 1974 and the Helsinki Accords in August of 1975.¹⁰⁵ The successor treaty to SALT I, the Vladivostok Accords, represented the continued debate on arms control provisions between the Soviet Union and the United States, while the Helsinki Accords involved Soviet and European leaders joining together with the United States to agree upon existing European boundaries and support for human rights; both accords were attempts on President Ford's part to ease tension with the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ President Ford's success with achieving manageable tension levels with the Soviet Union early in his presidency allowed him the time to focus on his attempts to heal the country's war.

Speaking from the cabinet room in the White House, one of Ford's first acts as president, aside from pardoning his predecessor, was to address the long-time issue of Vietnam era draft dodgers and deserters. Pardoning President Nixon and draft dodgers

¹⁰⁵ John Robert Greene, "Gerald Ford: Foreign Affairs" (UVA: Miller Center): 2, <https://millercenter.org/president/ford/foreign-affairs> (accessed August 8, 2019).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

were attempts by the Ford administration to heal the wounds of the nation. On September 16, 1974, President Ford announced a program for the return of Vietnam era draft dodgers and military deserters.¹⁰⁷ President Ford stated that "On August 19, I announced my intention to give these young people a chance to earn their return to the mainstream of American society so they can contribute to the building and the betterment of our country and the world [...] I was determined then, as now, to do everything in my power to bind up the Nation's wounds."¹⁰⁸ President Ford recognized that those who had evaded the draft and or deserted the military while enlisted were viewed as traitors by many Americans, which ran the risk of further dividing an already deeply divided country. The Ford administration rhetorically positioned itself behind the unification of America by accepting those who evaded enlistment and choosing not to persecute and exclude them.

Continuing with his rhetoric of healing the country's wounds, on April 10, 1975, President Ford stood before Congress, the U.S. public, and the world to report America's course of action internationally after the conclusion of the Vietnam War. Covering topics that ranged from requesting more military, economic, and humanitarian aid to South Vietnam to outlining key steps towards maintaining a *détente* with the Soviet Union. President Ford took this opportunity to restate his agenda to heal the wounds of America. Quoting a letter sent to him by acting Cambodian President Saukham Khoy, President Ford relayed, "I cannot believe that this confidence was misplaced and that suddenly America will deny us the means which might give us a chance to find an acceptable

¹⁰⁷ Gerald R. Ford, "Remarks Announcing a Program for the Return of Vietnam Era Draft Evaders and Military Deserters," *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*, September 16, 1974.

¹⁰⁸ Ford, "Remarks Announcing a Program," 2.

solution to our conflict.”¹⁰⁹ President Ford stresses his dual rhetorical message in his reply to President Khoy when he stated:

We cannot, in the meantime, abandon our friends while our adversaries strengthen and encourage theirs. We cannot dismantle our defenses, our diplomacy, or our intelligence capabilities while others increase and strengthen theirs. Let us put an end to self-inflicted wounds. Let us remember that our national unity is a most priceless asset. Let us deny our adversaries the satisfaction of using Vietnam to pit Americans against Americans. At this moment, the U.S. must present to the world a united front.¹¹⁰

By pushing for the integration of draft dodgers and deserters back into society while also promoting détente with the Soviet Union, President Ford appeased the anti-interventionist zeal of the U.S. public and Congress which was being fueled by the lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. His rhetoric also derived from a place of strength with the call for America to stand with its allies and command a united front.

Shortly after his speech to Congress, President Ford addressed Tulane University at their convocation with the same message of healing the country’s wounds. In his speech to the students and faculty, President Ford drew parallels to a historical instance of restoring America’s image. He cited America’s devastating loss during the War of 1812 and highlighted how only two years following the conclusion of the war, the

¹⁰⁹ Gerald R. Ford, “Address by President Gerald R. Ford before a Joint Session of Congress Reporting on United States Foreign Policy,” *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*, April 10, 1975.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

monumental victory of the Battle of New Orleans restored national pride.¹¹¹ President Ford recalled “outnumbered Americans innovated, outnumbered Americans used the tactics of the frontier to defeat a veteran British force.”¹¹² President Ford bolstered his rhetorical message further by stating:

As I see it, the time has come to look forward to an agenda for the future, to unify, to bind up the Nations wounds, and to restore its health and its optimistic self-confidence. In New Orleans, a great battle was fought after a war was over, in New Orleans tonight, we can begin a national reconciliation.¹¹³

President Ford's rhetorical message of healing coupled with his insistence that the United States uphold its international responsibilities by standing with its allies were aimed at trying to reconcile the limiting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome and to unify the vastly divided country he inherited.

In his annual State of the Union Address on January 19, 1976, President Ford focused on the national mood. He acknowledged the troubled state of the country by citing an economy ravaged by inflation and plunged into a worsening recession; however, in a move to motivate the American public, President Ford bluntly spoke to the national mood with his declaration, “I say it is time we quit downgrading ourselves as a nation [...] Of course, it is our responsibility to learn the right lessons from past mistakes [...] but the world's troubles will not go away.”¹¹⁴ President Ford attempted to shift the American public's focus from sulking over the Vietnam War since it was negatively

¹¹¹ Gerald R. Ford, “Address at Tulane University Convocation,” April 23, 1975, 1.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Ford, “Address before a Joint Session of Congress Reporting on U.S. Foreign Policy,” 5.

impeding the U.S. from supporting its allies which imparted weakness to the world, an image President Ford would not tolerate. He addressed this issue when he stated, “We must not face a future in which we can no longer help our friends, such as Angola, even in limited and carefully controlled ways.”¹¹⁵ We must not lose all capacity to respond short of military intervention.”¹¹⁶ Once again, in one speech he relayed his dual rhetorical message of healing from strength, revealing his continued attempts to lessen the limiting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome preventing his ability to support U.S. allies against encroaching enemies.

In his third and final State of the Union, President Ford recapped and framed his presidency within the context of a deeply divided and crippled nation. President Ford states,

When I became President on August 9, 1974, our Nation was deeply divided and tormented. In rapid succession, the Vice President and the President had resigned in disgrace. We were still struggling with the after-effects of a long, unpopular, and bloody war in Southeast Asia. The economy was unstable and racing toward the worst recession in 40 years. People were losing jobs. The cost of living was soaring. The Congress and the Chief executive were at loggerheads. The integrity of our constitutional process and other institutions were being questioned.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ A reference to the Angola Civil War starting in 1975. A civil war broke out due to Angola establishing its independence from Portugal in November 1975.

¹¹⁶ Ford, “Address before a Joint Session of Congress Reporting on U.S. Foreign Policy,” 5.

¹¹⁷ Gerald Ford, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress Reporting on the State of the Union,” (*Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum*, January 12, 1977), <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/speeches/761057.asp> (accessed November 13, 2018).

After President Ford framed his presidency within the poor conditions in which he inherited it, he addressed how his administration was more successful than his predecessor in moving the country back towards unity and prosperity; however, President Ford also highlighted how the Vietnam War significantly impacted the nation by altering its cultural view of war. President Ford stated that "The Vietnam War, both materially and psychologically, affected our overall defense posture. The dangerous antimilitary sentiment discouraged defense spending and unfairly disparaged the men and women who served in the Armed Forces."¹¹⁸ President Ford warned the U.S. public of the consequences for allowing the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome to impact America's international responsibilities to its allies. He cautioned, "The U.S. can never tolerate a shift in the strategic balance against us [and] the U.S. would risk the most serious political consequences if the world came to believe that our adversaries have a decisive margin of superiority."¹¹⁹ President Ford's rhetoric heavily relied on the dual narrative of healing the wounds of a country in a post-Vietnam era while simultaneously staging a position of strength to the world because he and his administration feared losing the balance of world power and the subsequent potential demise of the American political system.

President Ford: Rhetoric In Action

Following the similar dual narrative of his rhetoric, President Ford's foreign policy delicately balanced a dual message of supporting allies abroad and calling for more allied support in return. For example, President Ford authorized National Security

¹¹⁸ Ford, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress Reporting on the State of the Union."

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 270 on September 24, 1974 and NSDM-315 on January 31, 1976, both regarding military assistance to Israel. NSDM-270 lists all the approved military items, along with certain additional items to be sold to Israel.¹²⁰ While NSDM-315 revised Israel's military budget to no more than a total exceeding \$2.0 billion worth of U.S. military equipment.¹²¹ It is clear that President Ford was motivated to support his rhetoric of U.S. continued commitment to its allies abroad within his foreign policy. However, signs of the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome are evident in President Ford's foreign policy.

On May 3, 1975, President Ford authorized NSDM-293 which requested more Allied contributions to the collective security of NATO. NSDM-293 states that, "In general, given the recent change in the world monetary system and in economic conditions, greater emphasis should be given to encourage our NATO Allies to increase the quality and effectiveness of their own forces."¹²² Furthermore, NSDM-293 states that, "Representatives of the U.S. Government should emphasize to our NATO Allies that their efforts to strengthen their own forces... will be viewed by the U.S. Government as their most significant contribution to the sharing of the burden of NATO defense."¹²³ President Ford's request for Allied members to increase their contribution to the collective security of western powers is a clear indication that the U.S. needed time to

¹²⁰ Brent Scowcroft, "National Security Decision Memorandum 270: Military Assistance for Israel," *National Security Council*, September 24, 1974, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdm-ford/index.html> (accessed March 25, 2019).

¹²¹ Brent Scowcroft, "National Security Decision Memorandum 315: "Military Assistance for Israel," *National Security Council*, January 31, 1976, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdm-ford/index.html> (accessed March 25, 2019).

¹²² Henry A. Kissinger, "National Security Decision Memorandum 293: US Approach toward Enhancing the Allied Contribution to the Defense of NATO," *National Security Council*, May 3, 1975, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdm-ford/index.html> (accessed March 25, 2019).

¹²³ *Ibid.*

recover from the Vietnam War and that the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome had permeated into U.S. foreign policy. NSDM-293 is also an indication of President Ford and his administration's attempt to support their rhetoric of supporting U.S. Allies.

President Ford continued his dual message with his authorization of NSDM-322 on March 31, 1976. NSDM-322 set out to address captured American equipment in Indochina, specifically in Vietnam. NSDM-322 adhered to President Ford's dual narrative for on one hand, NSDM-322 is meant to discourage Vietnam from selling captured American equipment by taking a public stance of the sale; but on the other, will do what can be done discreetly to help countries that support U.S. policies if they decide to purchase from Vietnam.¹²⁴ Moreover, NSDM-322 instructed that the U.S. "take all feasible measures to impede sales to others."¹²⁵ President Ford once again supported his dual narrative rhetoric by trying to remain committed to America's allies by discreetly selling them captured American equipment, while also trying to project strength by publicly standing against the illegal sale of captured U.S. equipment. By trying to enforce his rhetoric with foreign policy, President Ford had to delicately balance the show of strength and commitment to the Allies, with the healing of America's wounds and encouraging other allied NATO nations to increase their contributions to NATO.

Even though President Ford's primary message was to unify and heal the wounds caused by the Vietnam War, throughout his presidency he would often espouse the

¹²⁴ Brent Scowcroft, "National Security Decision Memorandum 322: American Equipment Captured in Indochina," *National Security Council*, March 31, 1976, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdm-ford/index.html> (accessed March 25, 2019).

¹²⁵ Scowcroft, "National Security Decision Memorandum 322."

rhetoric projecting U.S. strength through constant support for its allies against mutual enemies. In the case of Angola, however, the Ford administration failed in their objective and it was instances such as Angola and the constant push for détente with the Soviet Union that caused conservatives from both political parties, members of Ford's cabinet like Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger and California governor at the time, Ronald Reagan, to believe that Nixon, Ford, and Kissinger underestimated the severity of the Soviet threat and were too unwilling to confront the Soviets from a believable position of strength.¹²⁶ Despite conservatives calling for more forceful action against the Soviet Union, the American people and Congress still warranted messages of unification and healing if they were to be persuaded back towards favoring an interventionist stance.

President Jimmy Carter: The Humanitarian Peace Broker

Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, President Carter advocated for the further de-escalation of tensions between America and the Soviet Union through a policy of continued détente. President Carter's rhetoric deviated from President Ford's message, however, in that it focused on revitalizing America's humanitarian values and restoring America's image away from the policeman of the world and towards the peace brokers of the world. By re-establishing the U.S. image, President Carter hoped the American people would once again trust in their government's ability to conduct foreign policy in accordance with the moral and ethical standards established under Wilsonianism and the U.N. declaration of human rights.

¹²⁶ Greene, "Gerald Ford: Foreign Affairs," 2.

President Carter's use of Wilsonian rhetoric was not a hollow ploy to gain the support of the American people to start another major war or funding from Congress to increase the war budget. Within his own foreign policy objective and moral compass, President Carter believed in the universal rule of law among international affairs and the right of all people to self-determination.¹²⁷ Furthermore, President Carter made it clear that America would exercise extreme caution when considering using force and would do all in its power to avoid military intervention. The implementation of détente strategies with the Soviet Union allowed President Carter to further his peace broker message and focus on spreading his Wilsonian rhetoric. A way in which President Carter sought to re-establish America's Wilsonian image was by prioritizing human rights throughout his administration's rhetoric. During his 1976 campaign, then Governor of Georgia Carter promised that his administration would secure human rights as fundamental to his foreign policy which proved popular with voters.¹²⁸ Beginning with his inaugural address, President Carter sought to establish his administration and his presidential legacy as the humanitarian peace broker of the world.

In his January 20, 1977 Inaugural Address, President Carter opened by paying homage to President Ford and his administration's hard-fought presidency. President Carter stated, "I want to thank my predecessor for all he has done to heal our land."¹²⁹ Briefly connecting his own message to President Ford's message of unification and healing the country's wounds, President Carter additionally called for the American

¹²⁷ Robert A. Strong, "Jimmy Carter: Foreign Affairs" (UVA: Miller Center): 1, <https://millercenter.org/president/carter/foreign-affairs> (accessed September 1, 2019).

¹²⁸ Strong, "Jimmy Carter," 1.

¹²⁹ Jimmy Carter, "Inaugural Address of President Jimmy Carter," January 20, 1977, 1.

people to unite under the values of Wilsonianism as a means to illuminate the way to peace and safety. President Carter declared,

Let our recent mistakes bring a resurgent commitment to the basic principles of our Nation, for we know that if we despise our own government, we have no future. We recall in special times when we have stood briefly, but magnificently, united.¹³⁰

President Carter called for the U.S. public to stand united and protect human rights as he stated “Our commitment to human rights must be absolute, our laws fair [...] the powerful must not persecute the weak, and human dignity must be enhanced.”¹³¹ Moreover, President Carter called for the public to unite under Wilsonianism to spread democracy, freedom, and Wilsonian values. President Carter stated, “Our Nation can be strong abroad only if it is strong at home [and] the best way to enhance freedom in other lands is to demonstrate here that our democratic system is worthy of emulation.”¹³² He called for a new passion for freedom, and by “Tapping this new spirit, there can be no nobler more ambitious task for America to undertake on this day of a new beginning than to help shape a just and peaceful world that is truly humane.”¹³³ His inauguration speech implies that President Carter was determined to not only right the wrongs of the world, but to rebrand the U.S. as the peace brokers of the world rather than its policeman. It

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Carter, “Inaugural Address of President Jimmy Carter.”

¹³³ Ibid.

comes as no surprise that early in his presidency, President Carter took on one of the world's most war-torn regions, the Middle East.

On September 18, 1978, President Carter announced the historic peace agreement between Egypt and Israel known as the Camp David Accords. With 2,000 years of conflict, war, and animosity, the will and determination of both Egypt and Israel to reach peace along with the negotiations and mediation of the U.S., broke through centuries of hate and violence and allowed for the two leaders to finally approach one another as equals. President Carter stated,

At Camp David, we sought a peace that is not only of vital importance to their own two nations but to all people of the Middle East, to all the people of the United States, and, indeed, to all the world as well... The United States has had no choice not to be deeply concerned about the Middle East and to try to use our influence and our efforts to advance the cause of peace... We have a long-standing friendship among the nations there and the peoples of the region, and we have profound moral commitments which are deeply rooted in our values as people... The strategic location of these countries and the resources that they possess mean that events in the Middle East directly affect people everywhere. We and our friends could not be indifferent if a hostile power were to establish domination there. In few areas of the world is there a greater risk that a local conflict could spread among other nations adjacent to them and then, perhaps, erupt into a tragic confrontation between us superpowers, ourselves. ¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Jimmy Carter, "Camp David Accords," *Speech Vault*, September 18, 1978, 1.

President Carter spoke not only to the triumph of peace and diplomacy between nations but to the shift in global politics and the necessity to keep the Middle East free for the world. President Carter concluded his Camp David speech with a message from one man of faith to another. He relayed, “We have a chance for peace because these two leaders found within themselves the willingness to work together to seek these lasting prospects for peace,”¹³⁵ and continued on to say, “I would like to say, as a Christian, to these two friends of mine, the words of Jesus, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be the children of God.’”¹³⁶ Successfully brokering peace within the Middle East gave President Carter the win that his administration required to secure the trust of the American people in their government’s ability to successfully conduct foreign policy within the moral and ethical guide lines of Wilsonianism.

On January 23, 1979, President Carter addressed the U.S. in his annual State of the Union. Among the usual topics like economics, domestic and foreign policy, and energy, President Carter also used his State of the Union Address to strengthen America’s newly established Wilsonian image by mentioning its responsibility to its NATO allies abroad and distinguishing the U.S. as the peacemaker of the world. President Carter stated,

But our national security in this complicated age requires more than just military might. In less than a lifetime, world population has more than doubled, colonial empires have disappeared, and a hundred new nations have been born

¹³⁵ Carter, “Camp David Accords,” 3.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

and migration to the world's cities have all awakened new yearnings for economic justice and human rights among people everywhere.¹³⁷

President Carter's Wilsonian rhetoric of self-determination and human rights for newly freed post-colonial countries still fighting for their rights, combined forces with his plan to beat the Soviet Union by showcasing an economically strong and united America and pitching democracy as a system worth emulating. President Carter also continued to differentiate the U.S. from its previous image as policeman of the world to the peacemaker of the world. President Carter confirmed, "We have no desire to be the world's policeman. But America does want to be the world's peacemaker."¹³⁸ By rebranding the U.S. image away from the policeman and towards that of the peacemaker, President Carter was able to satisfy the U.S. public's call for peace. As conflict began to erupt in the Middle East, however, and the slow Soviet military buildup began mobilizing in Afghanistan, the American public rapidly turned its attention towards concern of potential warfare.

In the span of less than one year, from December 1979 to September 1980, two major conflicts erupted in the Middle East and Southwest Asia that demanded the U.S. public's attention. First, on December 24, 1979, the Soviet Union invaded the sovereign country of Afghanistan to establish a satellite Socialist government that was intended for protection under the Soviet umbrella. Second, on September 22, 1980, Iran and Iraq opened fire at border towns with long-range artillery fire kickstarting the Iran-Iraq War.

¹³⁷ Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Address," January 23, 1979, 5.

¹³⁸ Carter, "State of the Union Address," 5.

President Carter began to receive pressure from his constituents to show more resolve in the face of these international affairs but was not able to demonstrate enough aggression or successfully bring an end to the Iranian hostage crisis – a feat that his successor was able to achieve a year later in January 1981. On January 23, 1980, only a month after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and roughly eight months before the start of Iran-Iraq War, President Carter announced the establishment of a new Middle East policy in his State of the Union Address in order to introduce his new rhetorical position.

To appear tougher on communism, President Carter claimed the Middle East under the security and protection of the America, and in his 1980 State of the Union made absolutely clear that,

Any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America and as such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.¹³⁹

Backing up his statement with action, President Carter proposed a five-year defense program that would increase the annual real commitment for defense roughly five percent without any reductions.¹⁴⁰ He wanted to present a stronger front against communism because unlike his campaign years, peace had already been brokered, and the American people wanted someone willing and able to protect American interests abroad. President Carter's attempt to radically switch his rhetoric from promoting peace

¹³⁹ Jimmy Carter, "The State of the Union Address Delivered Before the Joint Session of the Congress," *The American Presidency Project*, January 23, 1980, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-state-the-union-address-delivered-before-joint-session-the-congress> (accessed August 2, 2019).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

and human rights to returning as the policeman of the world seemed unlikely and his opponents took notice. One conservative Republican in particular, Jeane Kirkpatrick, who became the U.S representative to the U.N. under the Reagan administration artfully attacked President Carter for apparently undercutting American allies by criticizing their poor human rights record. Attacks like Kirkpatrick's proved damaging to President Carter's image in the 1980 presidential election and he eventually lost re-election to the Hollywood actor turned governor of California, Ronald Reagan, in part due to Reagan's tough rhetorical position on communism, which was the message that resonated with the majority of the American public.¹⁴¹

President Carter: Rhetoric In Action

In his years as president, following his rhetoric of the U.S. as the peace broker not the policeman of the world, President Carter supported his message of humanitarianism through supplemental foreign policy decisions. The first of these decisions came about on August 24, 1977 with President Carter's authorization of Presidential Directive/NSC-18 covering America's national strategy. Provided under the presumption that U.S.-Soviet relations, for the foreseeable future, would be one of continued competition and cooperation, President Carter made it part of his administration's strategy to "compete politically with the Soviet Union by pursuing the basic American commitment to human rights and national independence."¹⁴² More than just an attempt to persuade the U.S. public and the international community to view the U.S. as a peace broker, President

¹⁴¹ Greene, "Gerald Ford: Foreign Affairs," 2.

¹⁴² President Jimmy Carter, "Presidential Directive/NSC-18," *U.S. National Strategy*, August 24, 1977, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pd/index.html> (accessed May 16, 2019).

Carter used his humanitarian rhetoric to support foreign policy strategies centered around human rights to counter Soviet actions.

Authorized on February 17, 1978, NSC-30 spoke directly to President Carter's insistence that a fundamental objective of U.S. foreign policy under his administration would be prioritizing universal human rights. NSC-30 states that, "It shall be a major objective of U.S. foreign policy to promote the observance of human rights throughout the world."¹⁴³ Furthermore, President Carter detailed seven points explaining exactly how the U.S. planned to secure international human rights. Among the seven points, point six reads,

The U.S. shall not, other than in exceptional circumstances, take any action which would result in material of financial support to the police, civil law enforcement authorities, or other performing internal security functions of governments engaged in serious violations of human rights.¹⁴⁴

Point six is important to note because after President Carter lost the 1980 presidential election to the more aggressive anti-communist message given by Ronald Reagan, Reagan's foreign policy completely abandoned the previous administration's humanitarian slant. President Reagan directly opposed President Carter's established humanitarian policy by supplying arms to the Mujahedeen during the Soviet Afghan War, actively lying to Congress about human rights violations in El Salvador, and illegally trading arms for hostages to Iran, all while spouting his administration's rhetoric of being tough on communism.

¹⁴³ President Jimmy Carter, "Presidential Directive/NSC-30," *Human Rights*, February 17, 1978, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pd/index.html> (accessed May 16, 2019).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

President Ronald Reagan: Revitalization Of Interventionist Rhetoric

After repeated rhetorical messages of healing, peace, and humanitarianism, coupled with the rising conflicts in Southwest Asia and the Middle East, the American public wanted a president who could be rhetorically tough on communism. The public felt that President Carter's approach was too soft, and at least initially, Americans voiced higher satisfaction with President Reagan's harder line towards the Soviets.¹⁴⁵

Inaugurated into office on January 20, 1981, President Reagan sought to uphold his campaign promises and crack down on communism by taking direct action against the lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on U.S. foreign policy. President Reagan wanted to be tough on communism by using force while the U.S. public and Congress were not quite yet ready for military action – instead, both preferred a stricter yet diplomatic solution of containment through continued détente with the Soviet Union. Yet, the Soviet Union showed little indication of limiting its expansion, prompting some within Congress and the Reagan administration to feel that actions rather than words were necessary to protect America's vital national security interests abroad from communist influence. That is why in an attempt to satisfy the anti-interventionist needs of the America populace and Congress, as well as the interventionist needs of his administration, President Reagan used a specific rhetorical message that directly targeted the Vietnam Syndrome, promoted the concepts of peace through strength, labeled the Soviet Union as the evil empire, all to contextualize his foreign policy objectives in a way that best resonated with the U.S. public and Congress. In doing so, he opposed both Congress and the newly re-established

¹⁴⁵ Tom W. Smith, "American Attitudes Towards the Soviet Union and Communism," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (1983): 277.

humanitarian image to fund and support covert operations against communist insurgencies in areas such as Central America, Southeast Asia and the Middle East which were all vital to U.S. national security interests.

In an address to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention in Chicago, on August 18, 1980, former Governor Reagan spoke of the lasting and limiting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on U.S. foreign policy as well as the U.S. public. Reagan stated that "For too long, we have lived with the 'Vietnam Syndrome.' Over and over they [the North Vietnamese] told us for nearly 10 years that we were the aggressors bent on imperialistic conquest."¹⁴⁶ Reagan went on to say, "There is a lesson for all of us in Vietnam, 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 peace."¹⁴⁷ President Reagan's direct rhetorical attack against the Vietnam Syndrome was a message to the U.S. public and Congress to try and unshackle the limiting and anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. According to Reagan, the Vietnam Syndrome prevented the U.S. from securing peace in Vietnam, and that to gain peace, America had to rid society of the Vietnam Syndrome. Another way President Reagan's rhetorical message fought against the limiting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome was through his message of peace through strength, which harkened back to the rhetoric of President Carter's early presidency.

¹⁴⁶ Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention in Chicago," *The American Presidency Project*, August 18, 1980, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-veterans-foreign-wars-convention-chicago> (accessed July 18, 2019).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Nearly a month after his address to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, on September 19, 1980, Reagan launched a televised address for his strategy for peace. In his address, Reagan clearly outlined his definition of peace through strength:

We have heard the phrase peace through strength so often, its meaning has become blurred through overuse. The time has come for America to recall one more the basic truths behind the familiar words. Peace is *made* by the fact of strong economic, military and strategic. Peace is *lost* when such strength disappears or just as bad is seen by an adversary as disappearing. We must build peace upon strength. There is no other way. And the cold, hard fact of the matter is that our economic, military and strategic strength under President Carter is eroding. Only if *we* are strong will peace be strong.¹⁴⁸

By strongly emphasizing peace through economic, military, and strategic strength, Reagan wanted the U.S. public and Congress to greenlight a new defense budget that would meet the growing demands of the escalating conflicts between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Supporting his rhetoric, President Reagan, only two months after taking office, followed the advice of his Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and presented a five-year defense plan to Congress demanding a budget amounting to 1.5 trillion in total.¹⁴⁹ The largest peacetime defense budget increase in U.S. history meant that the Reagan administration was committed to confronting the growing threat of Soviet

¹⁴⁸ Ronald Reagan, "Televised Address of Governor Ronald Reagan A Strategy for Peace in the 80s," *Ronald Reagan Museum and Library* (September 19, 1980): 2. *In this speech and his Election Eve Address, President Reagan states that military might will not win the struggle for peace, only the American spirit can - bombs and rockets won't win, only belief in God will strengthen American.

¹⁴⁹ Lawrence J. Korb, "Spending without Strategy: The FY 1988 Annual Defense Department Report," *International Security* 12, no. 1 (1987): 166.

aggression. As President Reagan and his administration's rhetorical message continued, they began to contextualize their message of confronting communism within the age-old narrative of good vs. evil.

On March 8, 1983, in his remarks at an Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, FL, more popularly known as the "Evil Empire Speech," President Reagan sought to set the stage of his new attack on the Soviet Union and the Vietnam Syndrome. President Reagan tapped into the moral and ethical ethos of the U.S. public after a Washington based research council determined that Americans are more religious than any other people in any other country, quoting that a staggering 95 percent of those who participated in the survey believed in God and a majority of those felt that the Ten Commandments had a meaningful impact in their lives.¹⁵⁰ President Reagan framed democracy within the guidelines of the Ten Commandments and the moral teachings of Jesus Christ, placing America within a holy and righteous fight pitted against the immoral and evil Soviet Union's communist government. He stated "they repudiate all morality that proceeds from supernatural ideas [...] morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of class war and everything is moral that is necessary for the annihilation of the old. Exploiting social order and uniting the proletariat."¹⁵¹ He continued on with, "but until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the

¹⁵⁰ Ronald Reagan, *Remarks at an Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, FL*, from Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, March 8, 1983, video clip, 30.05 min, <https://www.reaganfoundation.org/library-museum/permanent-exhibitions/berlin-wall/from-the-archives/remarks-at-the-annual-convention-of-the-national-association-of-evangelicals-in-orlando-florida/> (accessed April 22, 2019).

¹⁵¹ Ronald Reagan, *Remarks at an Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, FL*.

supremacy of the state, declare omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all people on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.”¹⁵² By establishing the narrative of the U.S. on the side of Christ pitted against the atheist communists, President Reagan attempted to justify to the U.S. public and Congress why the Soviet Union posed such a grave threat to the peace and security of the American way of life. Even though the good vs. evil narrative between the U.S. and the Soviet Union had already been well established since the late 1940s, President Reagan placed the rhetoric at the forefront of his messaging to not only emphasize the continued threat that Soviet communism represented but to reiterate America’s moral high ground. By the beginning of 1985, President Reagan sought to ramp up his rhetoric against the Soviet Union, requesting that the American people and Congress support America’s democratic allies against Soviet expansion.

In his 1985 State of the Union Address to Congress, President Reagan called for the American people and Congress to break away from the decades of détente as a means of containment and towards a more active interventionist stance that was more in line with Paul Nitze’s interpretation of containment. Reagan stated, “We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives – on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua – to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth.”¹⁵³ By 1985, President Reagan’s

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ronald Reagan, *Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union*, from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, February 6, 1985, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-before-joint-session-the-congress-the-state-the-union-5> (accessed June 6, 2019).

implementation of containment followed John Foster Dulles 'rollback' strategy in which the United States actively pushed back at the Soviet's expanding influence.¹⁵⁴ This was an attempt by the Reagan administration to please the more interventionist minded within his administration and Congress. Further placating the interventionist mindset of the Reagan administration, as well as making good on the campaign promise of defeating communism, President Reagan and his administration provided arms to the Mujahideen in the Soviet-Afghan War, lied to Congress about human right violations in El Salvador, and completely sidestepped Congressional law by illegally funding the Contras in Central America, all in order to help combat the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome.

President Reagan: Rhetoric In Action

The Soviet-Afghan War

Early in his presidency, President Reagan directed the U.S. public's attention to the freedom fighters in the mountains of Afghanistan, more popularly known as the Mujahideen, since unchecked Soviet activity threatened stability within the Middle East. To highlight the Mujahideen's cause, President Reagan dedicated the March 22nd launch of the spaceship Columbia to those in Afghanistan fighting against Soviet occupation. President Reagan relayed,

Just as the Columbia, we think, represents man's finest aspirations in the fields of science and technology, so too does the struggle of the Afghan people

¹⁵⁴ United States Department of State, "Kennan and Containment, 1947" *Office of the Historian Bureau of Public Affairs*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/kennan> (accessed July 18, 2019).

represent man's highest aspirations for freedom. I am dedicating on behalf of the American people, the March 22nd launch of the Columbia to the people of Afghanistan.¹⁵⁵

This was not the last time President Reagan called the plight of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan to the attention of the U.S. public and Congress. Reagan also used his 1985 State of the Union Address to highlight the need for aid for both the Afghans as well as the Nicaraguans. President Reagan's strategy for aiding the Mujahideen in the Soviet-Afghan War was not to have them win, but rather, to make Afghanistan the Soviet's own Vietnam by arming rebels and bleed the Soviets into retreat.¹⁵⁶ Supporting this, on January 17, 1983, nearly two years before his 1985 State of the Union Address, President Reagan signed NSDD-75 which adhered to his push to pull the Soviets into their own Vietnam. NSDD-75 states that "Afghanistan: The U.S. objective is to keep maximum pressure on Moscow for withdrawal and to ensure that the Soviets' political, military, and other costs remain high while the occupation continues."¹⁵⁷ The theory here was, if the Soviet Union could get bogged down in a Vietnam quagmire as the U.S. did, the Soviet Union would have no choice but to abandon its expansionist goals and retreat.

Moreover, President Reagan also chose to aid the Mujahideen because of the continued anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. President Reagan sought

¹⁵⁵ The VoxRox, "Ronald Reagan - Dedication to the Freedom Fighters in Afghanistan," filmed March 1982, YouTube video, 35 sec., posted March 31, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BH3KOrD09U> (accessed May 3, 2019).

¹⁵⁶ Richard Cohen, "The Soviets' Vietnam," *The Washington Post*, April 22, 1988.

¹⁵⁷ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive 75: U.S. Relations With the USSR," January 17, 1983.

to support freedom fighters such as the Mujahideen as a means to uphold U.S. intervention through containment by force. In March of 1985, President Reagan released NSD-166, which aimed to specifically use covert operations as a means to confront the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and prevent the spread of communism. President Reagan stated that "Our covert programs will deny Afghanistan as a secure base from which to project power and influence in the region."¹⁵⁸ Shortly after the release of NSD-166, President Reagan began ramping up support and aid to the Mujahideen. A *New York Times* article published in April of 1988 stated that "The budget for the covert operation more than doubled to 280 million in the fiscal year 1985 from 122 million in 1984."¹⁵⁹ Struggling, however, to deter the more sophisticated and advanced military of the Soviet Union, the Mujahideen required more support to stop communist expansion.

Turning the tides in the war, the U.S. began shipping its top portable surface-to-air Stinger missiles to the Mujahideen, who then used them against the Soviet's dominating air power. By the summer of 1986 the Mujahideen had acquired shipments of the Stinger missile, and by September of the same year, the Mujahideen had successfully shot down their first Soviet helicopter.¹⁶⁰ At first, the use of the Stinger missiles was under the supervision of U.S. Special Forces instructors and the Pakistan ISI, however, with a kill rate of 75 percent, the Stinger missile became heavily sought after and was handed out with limited regulation.¹⁶¹ America's sale of Stinger missiles to the

¹⁵⁸ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive/NSD-166: U.S. Policy, Program, and Strategy in Afghanistan," March 27, 1985, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-166.pdf> (accessed July 18, 2019).

¹⁵⁹ Robert Pear, "Arming Afghan Guerrillas: A Huge Effort Led by the U.S.," *The New York Times*, April 18, 1988.

¹⁶⁰ John Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America, and International Terrorism* (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2002): 144.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Mujahedeen proved to be the pivotal turning point of the Soviet-Afghan War in favor of the Afghans. By the time the Soviets had withdrawn from Afghanistan in 1989, the CIA was exhibiting frantic attempts to buy back excess Stinger missiles to prevent them from being sold on the black market. Unfortunately, the Stinger missile had been seen in use during the Iran-Iraq War, and in October of 1987, the Pentagon had to acknowledge that Iran had received spare parts for the Stinger missiles through the black market.¹⁶² The issue of the Stinger missile being covertly used and sold on the black market did not stop, however, prompting the H.W. Bush administration, years later, to enact Operation MIAS, a frantic plea to Congress to authorize \$10 million to buy back Stinger missiles from the Gulf.¹⁶³ The decision to sell advanced weapons to jihadist rebel groups like the Mujahideen, who then sold these weapons to known U.S. enemies such as Iran, reinforced the concept that those covert means directly opposed the previously established humanitarian foreign policy of the Carter administration.

President Reagan further supported his rhetoric of being tough on communism by authorizing another foreign policy initiative assessing U.S. strategy and objectives in Afghanistan. NSDD-270, authorized on May 1, 1987, echoed the same objectives established under NSDD-75. As a top U.S. objective in Afghanistan, NSDD-270 stated,

Raise the military and political costs to the Soviets of their occupation of Afghanistan as a means of pressuring them into a comprehensive political settlement that results in the prompt, complete, and irrevocable withdrawal of Soviet troops and genuine Afghan self-determination.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Cooley, *Unholy Wars*, 145.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive 270: Afghanistan," May 1, 1987, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/index.html> (accessed June 6, 2019).

President Reagan decided to continue the seven-year policy of draining Soviet military and political resources into Afghanistan, similar to America's actions in Vietnam, by pressuring the Soviets to exit Afghanistan, all the while accruing similar sentiments the U.S. felt through the Vietnam Syndrome. Furthermore, by authorizing directives such as NSDD-75 and 270, the Reagan administration was simultaneously challenging the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome by covertly intervening in Afghanistan by arming the jihadist terrorist group the Mujahedeen. Unlike the Carter administration, arms transfer's such as Stinger missiles sales to the Mujahedeen, and the trading of arms for hostages during the Iran-Contra scandal, were seen as an essential component to the Reagan administration's foreign policy.

President Reagan established early in his presidency, the fundamental imperative that conventional arms transfers would be a continued practice in his administration's foreign policy. Authorized on July 8, 1981, NSDD-5 outlined exactly what his administration's goals and objectives would be concerning arms transfers. NSDD-5 states,

The United States cannot defend the free world's interests alone. The United States must, in today's world, not only strengthen our own military capabilities, but be prepared to help its friends and allies to strengthen theirs through the transfer of conventional and other forms of security assistance. Such transfers complement American security commitments and serve important United States objectives. Prudently pursued, arms transfers can strengthen us.¹⁶⁵

President Reagan authorized and emphasized policies such as NSDD-5 because of the anti- effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. By using covert operations and arms transfers such as in the Soviet-Afghan War, President Reagan not only was able intervene against

¹⁶⁵ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Directive Decision 5: Conventional Arms Transfers Policy," July 8, 1981, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/index.html> (accessed June 6, 2019).

the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan but was able to do it without a national incident. That is why even though supplying arms to jihadist terrorist groups such as the Mujahedeen went against the newly re-established humanitarian image of the U.S., President Reagan was willing to risk this image in order to challenge the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. The Reagan administration further defied the re-established humanitarian image of the U.S. by lying to Congress about human rights violations occurring in El Salvador.

The El-Salvadoran Civil War

On March 24, 1980, Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated by a single gunshot wound to the chest from Salvadorian Army officer Roberto D'Aubuisson. This ignited a powder keg of violence and revolution throughout the country of El Salvador. Several months later, in September of 1980, five major leftist revolutionary organizations came together to form the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). The FMLN created a guerilla army to oppose the government and right-wing paramilitary forces.¹⁶⁶ By January 1981, the FMLN launched an all-out attack on the El Salvadorian government, prompting the U.S. to intervene by providing the El Salvadorian government with substantial military aid where, “Much of this aid went to the formation of the Rapid Deployment Infantry Battalions, the same groups identified by the UN Truth Commission as ‘the primary agents of war crimes.’”¹⁶⁷ President Reagan’s zeal, especially in the form

¹⁶⁶ The Center for Justice and Accountability, “El Salvador,” 2016, <https://cja.org/where-we-work/el-salvador/> (accessed September 1, 2019).

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

of military aid, to help prevent what was seen as a potential domino effect in Central and South America led many within the U.S. public and Congress to question his motives.

On February 24, 1981, in a White House briefing on the Program for Economic Recovery, President Reagan was asked, "Mr. President, is there any danger that we can become involved in El Salvador to the point that we might not be able to extract ourselves easily?" President Reagan replied, "No, I don't think so. I know that this is a great concern. I think it's a part of the Vietnam Syndrome, but we have no intentions of that kind of involvement."¹⁶⁸ As he continued to maintain his tough rhetoric on communism, he remained wary of the lingering anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. In fact, in September 1984, President Reagan surprisingly rejected the request of U.S. military commander for Latin American, General Paul Gorman, for American pilots to fly the larger AC-130 Specters against guerrilla strongholds because he perceived it to be too risky politically.¹⁶⁹ President Reagan, however, still felt that he needed to intervene in the El Salvadorian Civil War to prevent the leftist revolution from succeeding and preventing the Central American dominos from falling.

On April 27, 1983, President Reagan addressed Congress on the matter of Central America needing an ally with the following rhetorical message:

The problem is that an aggressive minority has thrown its lot in with the Communists, looking to the Soviets and their own Cuban henchmen to help them pursue political change through violence. They preach the doctrine of a

¹⁶⁸ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks During a White House Briefing on the Program for Economic Recovery," *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, February 24, 1981, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/22481a> (accessed August 28, 2019).

¹⁶⁹ James Lemoine, "U.S. Considers Sending Gun Ships to El Salvador," *New York Times*, September 1, 1984.

‘revolution without frontiers.’ Their first target is El Salvador. Important? Well, to begin with, there’s the sheer human tragedy. Thousands of people have already died and, unless the conflict is ended democratically, millions more could be affected throughout the hemisphere. The people of El Salvador have proved they want democracy. But if guerrilla violence succeeds, they won’t get it. El Salvador will join Cuba and Nicaragua as a base for spreading fresh violence to Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica – probably the most democratic country in the world today. The killing will increase and so will the threat to Panama, the canal and, ultimately, Mexico. In the process, vast numbers of men, women, and children will lose their homes, their countries, and their lives. Make no mistake. We want the same thing the people of Central America want – an end to the killing. We want to see freedom preserved where it now exists and its rebirth where it does not. The Communist agenda, on the other hand, is to exploit human suffering in Central America to strike at the heart of the Western Hemisphere.¹⁷⁰

President Reagan’s rhetoric aimed to motivate the U.S. public to support the democratic passion of the El Salvadorian government against the guerilla revolutionaries. On April 27, 1983, in his address on Central America, Reagan emphasized the rhetorical message of the El Salvadorian people rallying together for democracy. He stated that "the

¹⁷⁰ Ronald Reagan, “Remark on Central America and El Salvador at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers,” *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, March 10, 1983, [https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3-euw1-ap-pe-ws4-cws-documents.ri-prod/9780415521932/4_ReagansRemarksCentral AmericaElSalvador.pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3-euw1-ap-pe-ws4-cws-documents.ri-prod/9780415521932/4_ReagansRemarksCentralAmericaElSalvador.pdf) (accessed May 11, 2019).

people of El Salvador are earning their freedom and they deserve our moral and material support to protect it,"¹⁷¹ and recognized that, "guerrillas are not embattled peasants armed with muskets. They're professionals, sometimes with better training and weaponry than the government soldier."¹⁷² He used this rhetoric because the message of working to preserve democracy and to support America's democratic allies against the 'evil empire' was the only way that he could continue to justify intervention and ensure the success of the western-leaning government of El Salvador.

President Reagan, however, was forced to clarify his position due to the U.S. public and Congress' continuous disinclination to intervene in developing world conflicts. President Reagan stated, "Now before I go any further, let me say to those who invoke the memory of Vietnam, there is no thought of sending American combat troops to Central America. They are not needed."¹⁷³ The reason why President Reagan did not need to send soldiers to Central America is that he had already been successfully intervening by sending military aid and intelligence, and even arranged for Latin American governments to be trained to properly interrogate captured guerrillas. More importantly, President Reagan vocalized no thoughts of sending soldiers to Central America because he knew the U.S. public and Congress would not approve due to Vietnam Syndrome.

By 1988, U.S. intelligence agencies such as the SAS, SOG, and GB were providing the *Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual* to officers in Latin American countries. The manual detailed how to properly interrogate a subject without

¹⁷¹ Ronald Reagan, "Addresses a Joint Session of the Congress on Central America," *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, April 23, 1983.

¹⁷² Reagan, "Addresses a Joint Session of the Congress on Central America."

¹⁷³ Reagan, "Addresses a Joint Session of the Congress on Central America."

violating international human rights laws. In fact, there was an additional disclaimer for instructors in the introduction reading, "Prohibition Against the Use of Force. Reiterate when discussing Non-Coercive and Coercive techniques. Ensure that the students understand our position."¹⁷⁴ As previously mentioned, many in the El Salvadorian government, such as Roberto D'Aubuisson, were not opposed to committing egregious acts against humanity. Unfortunately,

Throughout the 1980s, the war between the government, guerilla and paramilitary forces continued to produce systematic human rights violations, subjecting civilians to torture, mutilation, forced disappearance, extrajudicial killing, and mass rape. Some 75,000 Salvadorans were killed by massacres, summary executions, landmines, and indiscriminate bombing.¹⁷⁵

Despite President Reagan's claims to the contrary, the reality of the civil war included mass amounts of human rights violations committed by the El Salvadorian government, so, President Reagan's consistent rhetoric which generated an inspiring narrative of a small government fighting for a democratic and peaceful resolution to the war, could be construed as a lie in order to gain the support of Congress to allow intervention. In a congressional hearing held on March 16th and 23rd in 1993 before the subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the Peace Process in El Salvador, called out Reagan's treachery when discussing torture in El Salvador. Hon. Robert G. Torricelli stated,

¹⁷⁴ The United States Central Intelligence Agency, "Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual," June 8, 1988, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB27/docs/doc02.pdf> (accessed June 8, 2019).

¹⁷⁵ The Center for Justice and Accountability, "El Salvador."

In a gesture of good faith and in the belief that it would contribute to peace, this Congress established a process, whereby Reagan would certify that progress was being made in respect to human rights. As a reaction to that certification, this Congress would provide military assistance to fight the war in El Salvador. It is now abundantly clear that Reagan made those certifications not only in disregard of the truth but in defiance of it. Members of his administration came forward to Congress and swore that they had no knowledge of acts of violence. Peace was being restored and rights respected. It was a lie.¹⁷⁶

President Reagan lied to Congress because he knew that the likelihood of ending the human rights violations was low, especially when his own intelligence agencies were actively aiding in the human rights abuses. Moreover, he lied to Congress about human rights violations in El Salvador because if he did not, due to a lack of funding and the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome, his administration would not have been able to intervene per containment policy, thus leaving Central America open to the possibility of a communist revolution and breaking the long-established policy of the Monroe Doctrine.

President Reagan supported his interventionist agenda in El Salvador through the authorization of NSDD-82 on February 24, 1983. The Reagan administration authorized NSDD-82 to establish a policy initiative that would help improve the prospect of victory in El Salvador. NSDD-82 states, “The deteriorating military, economic and political

¹⁷⁶ United States House of Representatives, The Sub Committee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, “The Peace Process in El Salvador,” March 1993, 2.

situation in El Salvador requires immediate and concerted action to reverse current trends...and the stage set for achieving a stable, democratic government in El Salvador.”¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Reagan administration was concentrated on making sure that Central America and the whole of the Western hemisphere remained secure from communist influence. In order to do this, President Reagan in NSDD-82 requested that an immediate effort be made for an additional \$60 million in military resources be sent to El Salvador as a means to make a determined effort to ensure that Latin American peace initiatives with the U.S. remained in place and the democratization process within Latin America persisted.¹⁷⁸ It is clear that the Reagan administration was deeply concerned with the possibility of a communist insurgency in Central America which could destabilize western security, so, in an effort to prevent this, President Reagan lied to Congress about the human rights violations so his administration could support a western-leaning insurgency and prevent revolutionary communist groups from gaining power – a move that challenged the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome with the use of tough-on-communism rhetoric. The Reagan administration continued to disregard the re-established U.S. humanitarian image with one the of the greatest political scandals in U.S. history: the Iran-Contra affair.

¹⁷⁷ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive 83, U.S. Policy Initiatives to Improve Prospects for Victory in El Salvador,” February 24, 1983, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/index.html> (accessed June 6, 2019).

¹⁷⁸ Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive 83.”

Iran-Contra

In an attempt to maintain America's security through the containment of communism, President Reagan and his administration sidestepped Congress in one of the most publicized scandals in U.S. history – the Iran-Contra scandal. Fearful that the Sandinistas, a socialist revolutionary group that took power in Nicaragua in 1979, was going to expand communism into Central America, President Reagan formed a plan to support a counter-revolutionary group called the Contras. By selling weapons to Iran that had been washed through Israel, the Reagan administration would receive funding for the Contra's efforts to restore containment throughout the western hemisphere, as well as secure the rescue of hostages from the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). One problem with the scheme, however, was the fact that the sale of weapons to Iran was illegal at the time, due to President Reagan's own declaration on January 19, 1984, when he labeled Iran a state sponsor of terror. Another obstacle to the plan took place years earlier in 1982, when Congress passed the Boland Amendment that explicitly stated that, "none of these funds provided in this act may be used by the CIA or the Department of Defense to furnish military equipment [...] or advice [...] for the purpose of assisting that group or individual in carrying out military activities in or against Nicaragua."¹⁷⁹ With the enactment of the Boland Amendment, Congress prohibited any funding or support of the Contra's fight in Nicaragua. By not only making it illegal to sell weapons to Iran due to their status on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list, President Reagan and his administration also faced the consequences of breaking the Boland Amendment as well.

¹⁷⁹ *The Boland Amendment*, December 1982, https://www.brown.edu/Research/Understanding_the_IranContraAffair/documents/d-nic-7.pdf (accessed August 30, 2019).

That is why when stories of a government-sanctioned secret operation began surfacing in 1986, the Reagan administration assumed the position of full denial. In an address from Washington on November 13, 1986, President Reagan denied all accusations that he or his administration had illegally sold or traded weapons to Iran in exchange for the release of hostages. He stated,

The charge has been made that the United States has shipped weapons to Iran as ransom payment for the release of American hostages in Lebanon, that the United States undercut its allies and secretly violated American policy against trafficking with terrorist. Those charges are utterly false. The United States has not made concessions to those who hold our people captive in Lebanon. And we will not. The United States has not swapped boatloads or planeloads of American weapons for the return of American hostages. And we will not. Reports are denied.¹⁸⁰

President Reagan's address in Washington is a key example of denial rhetoric – a response that can be expected in a presidency that operated illegally behind the scenes. In order to clear up the rumors and accusations of illegal active, President Reagan authorized the Tower Commission to open an investigation into the Iran-Contra affair to “have all the facts come out.”¹⁸¹ As it turned out, however, President Reagan was not necessarily pleased with the commission's report.

¹⁸⁰ Ronald Reagan, “Transcript of Remarks by Reagan about Iran,” *The New York Times*, November 14, 1986.

¹⁸¹ President Special Review Board, “Report of the President Special Review Board,” February 26, 1987, <https://archive.org/details/TowerCommission/page/n23> (accessed August 17, 2019).

On February 26, 1987, John Tower, along with Edmund Muskie and Brent Scowcroft published their report on the Iran-Contra affair. Within their findings they could not conclusively prove that President Reagan gave prior approval to Israel's transfers of arms to Iran. The Tower Commission report, however, did not exonerate President Reagan of ensuring that Iran could not obtain weapons. The Tower Commission states,

The President agreed to replenish Israeli stocks. We are persuaded that he most likely provided this approval prior to the first shipments by Israel. In coming to this conclusion, it is of paramount importance that the President never opposed the idea of Israel transferring arms to Iran. Indeed, four months after the August shipment, the President authorized the United States government to undertake directly the very same operation Israel had proposed. Even if Mr. McFarlane did not have the President's explicit prior approval, he clearly had his full support.¹⁸²

It is statements like the one above that prompted President Reagan a week later to issue an Address to the Nation concerning the Iran-Contra affair. In his address, President Reagan stated,

A few months ago, I told the American people I did not trade arms for hostages. My heart and my best intentions still tell me that's true; but the facts and the evidence tell me it is not. As the Tower Board reported, what began as a

¹⁸² President Special Review Board, "Report of the President Special Review Board."

strategic opening to Iran, deteriorated in its implementation into trading arms for hostages.¹⁸³

Not only did President Reagan have to admit to the nation his knowledge of the illegal arms-deal to Iran for hostages, he also had to accept responsibility for the incident. While President Reagan does in fact take full responsibility for what happened, he expressed anger that the illegal activities occurred without his knowledge. President Reagan's statement claiming ignorance of the illegal sale of arms to Iran was in itself a false statement. In Caspar Weinberger's declassified personal diary, General Colin Powell relayed an encounter between the president, Schultz, Don Regan, John McMahon, McFarland and John Poindexter, during which Powell recalled,

President wants to free hostages - Thinks Hawks and TOMs would only go to "Moderate Elements in Army" and would help overthrow Iranian gov't. I argued strongly that we have an Embargo that makes Arms sales to Iran illegal and the President couldn't violate it and that "washing" transaction through Israel wouldn't make it legal, Schultz, Don Regan agreed, President said he could answer to charges of illegality but he couldn't answer charge that "big strong President Reagan passed up a chance to free hostages."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Ronald Reagan, "Iran-Contra Address to the Nation, Oval Office of the White House, Washington D.C.," *AmericanRhetoric.com*, March 4, 1987.

¹⁸⁴ Caspar Weinberger, Diary, December 7, 1985, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB210/index.htm> (accessed June 4, 2019).

From this personal transcript, it is clear that not only was President Reagan aware that his actions were illegal, but he did not act alone. Furthermore, in a memorandum from a meeting on November 10, 1986 in the oval office, it was stated that Congress could and probably would hold legislative hearings.¹⁸⁵ President Reagan risked charges of illegality because his tough on communism rhetoric could not endure the criticism of failing to freeing hostages held in Lebanon – criticism that President Carter had to endure from Reagan and his party for Carter’s failure to solve the hostage crisis, which ultimately, helped Reagan win the election.

President Reagan, with his revisionist narrative mindset, authorized illegal covert actions because of the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome that applied unnecessary restrictions on U.S. foreign policy. Or as Michael Kinsley in his article, "From Rambo to Platoon," states, "The relationship between Platoon and the Iran scandal is not that the scandal changed public attitudes and made the movie popularity possible. It's that the public's attitude towards war, as tapped by Platoon, is what drove the Reagan administration to conduct an illegal war in secret, which led to the scandal."¹⁸⁶ Kinsley’s statement supports the claim that President Reagan and his administration covertly sold weapons to Iran in exchange for hostages and funding for the Contras in Central America due to the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome.

Another example of President Reagan’s rhetoric turned to action occurred on July 28, 1983, when he authorized NSDD-100 which called for the enhancement of U.S.

¹⁸⁵ *Memorandum for Record*, "Meeting with the President, Vice President, Secretary Schultz, DCI Casey, Attorney General Meese, Don Reagan, Admiral Poindexter, and Al Keel in Oval Office," November 10, 1986, [https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB210/20-Weinberger%20Memo%2011-10-86%20\(IC%2003732\).pdf](https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB210/20-Weinberger%20Memo%2011-10-86%20(IC%2003732).pdf) (accessed July 18, 2019).

¹⁸⁶ Michael Kinsley, "From Rambo to Platoon," *The Washington Post*, February 18, 1987.

military activity and assistance in Central America. President Reagan established NSDD-100 in response to “The consolidation of a Marxist-Leninist regime in Nicaragua, committed to the export of violence and totalitarianism, pose a significant risk to the stability of Central America.”¹⁸⁷ The Reagan administration believed that the stability and security of the western hemisphere per the Monroe Doctrine would be compromised should the communist group’s actions go unchecked. That is why NSDD-100 called for adequate U.S. support be provided to the democratic resistance forces within Nicaragua, to ensure that Nicaragua ceases to be a Soviet/Cuban base.¹⁸⁸ With the Boland Amendment in full effect, however, President Reagan and his administration had to side-step Congress and illegally sell weapons to Iran to not only free hostages, but to help support the democratic resistance forces in Nicaragua as called for in NSDD-100. Further pressing his foreign policy objectives in Central America, President Reagan authorized yet another national security decision. On February 7, 1984, NSDD-124 established the four objectives the U.S. had in Central America; supporting the advancement of democracy and free electoral processes in all Central American countries, supporting the economic development and humanitarian assistance to raise the standard of living in Central America, promoting the resolution of regional disputes through dialogue and negotiation, and providing sufficient security for the safety of democratic institutions and social reforms from communist subversion.¹⁸⁹ NSDD-124 built upon the previously

¹⁸⁷ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Directive Decision 100, Enhanced U.S. Military Activity and Assistance for the Central American Region,” July 28, 1983, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/index.html> (accessed July 26, 2019).

¹⁸⁸ Reagan, “National Security Directive Decision 100.”

¹⁸⁹ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive 124, Central America: Promoting Democracy, Economic Improvement, and Peace,” February 7, 1984, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/index.html> (accessed July 26, 2019).

established NSDD-100 by further establishing U.S. objectives and intervention within the Central America crisis. As the crisis in Central America continued to jeopardize vital U.S. interests, President Reagan also continued to enforce an interventionist foreign policy within Central America.

President Reagan's Central American foreign policy trend continued to follow the same goals and objective established under NSDD-124 with the authorization of NSDD-225 on May 20, 1986. Directly citing NSDD-124 and U.S. objectives in Central America, NSDD-225 specifically listed U.S. objectives within Nicaragua. Termination of Nicaragua's support of Marxist/Leninist subversion, removal of Soviet bloc/Cuban personnel from the region, an end to Nicaraguan military cooperation with communist countries, and the reduction of the Sandinista military apparatuses in the area were all primary objectives set forth in NSDD-225.¹⁹⁰ The directive further stated that in pursuit of those objectives, all U.S. government agencies had to keep in mind the importance of the overall goal to secure aid for Nicaragua's democratic resistance.¹⁹¹ NSDD-225 demonstrated that President Reagan was fully aware that his administration had not only continued to procure funding to help support the democratic resistance forces in Nicaragua, but the use and implementation of those funds by U.S. agencies had to be in line with maintaining credible diplomatic avenues. With the continued anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome influencing policies like the Boland Amendment, President Reagan was put in the position where he and his administration

¹⁹⁰ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive 225, Central America: U.S. Policy on the Search for a Negotiated Solution," May 20, 1986, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/index.html> (accessed July 26, 2019).

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

had to lie to Congress about human rights violation in El Salvador and the illegal sale of weapons to Iran to fund Nicaraguan democratic resistance forces; and he did that to stay true to his tough on communist rhetoric, side-step the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome, and uphold his and his administration's established foreign policy objectives.

Chapter Two Conclusion

From Ford to Reagan, presidents and their administrations viewed the Vietnam Syndrome and its anti-interventionist effects as an enemy to defeat, and in order to do so, each president used different rhetorical messages to re-establish America's faith in its leadership and remove the shackles of the Vietnam Syndrome on U.S. foreign policy. The first to address the limiting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome, President Ford, wrapped his foreign policy in the dual narrative of healing the nation's wounds but from a position of strength. He knew that if the U.S. remained disjointed and the wounds of the Vietnam War left untreated, the U.S. would not be able to protect its vital interests abroad. Following Ford's popular rhetoric, President Carter's rhetorical message sought to re-establish the U.S. image as the peace brokers of the world.

After the horrific events of the Vietnam War, the U.S. public, Congress, and the international world alike questioned America's commitment to peace and freedom. By re-establishing America's humanitarian image, Carter proved that the U.S. could successfully uphold its Wilsonian principles, unlike his successor, President Reagan.

In an attempt to satisfy the anti-interventionist needs of the U.S. public and Congress, as well as the interventionist needs of his administration, President Reagan used a specifically targeted rhetorical message that comprised of directly attacking the Vietnam Syndrome, promoting peace through strength, and branding the Soviet Union as

the 'evil empire' which contextualized his foreign policy objectives in a way that best resonated with the America people and Congress at the time. Eventually, President Reagan opposed both Congress and the newly re-established humanitarian image, to fund and support covert operations against communist insurgencies in areas such as Central America, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, which required established foreign policy objectives to challenge the lasting anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome.

As expressed earlier in Holsti and Rosenau's study, a consensus among U.S. leadership on U.S. foreign policy had not been achieved by President Reagan's second term in 1986. However, by January 1991, President H.W. Bush was able to create a consensus among leaders if only temporarily, to pass the declaration of war against Iraq. Chapter three will examine how President H.W. Bush was able to sell the Persian Gulf war as a means to 'kick' the lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on foreign policy, allowing the U.S. to once again employ major military intervention as a means to protect national security interests abroad.

CHAPTER THREE: KICKING THE VIETNAM SYNDROME

“It’s a proud day for America. And, by God, we’ve kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all.”¹⁹²

This statement made by President H.W. Bush on March 1, 1991 in his speech to the American Legislative Exchange Council is not only one of the most quintessential references to the Vietnam Syndrome made by any president but served also as a declaration that the New World Order had been a success. Up until August of 1990 however, both Congress and the U.S. public remained steadfast in their anti-interventionist position due to the lingering anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. Therefore, the question can be posed: how did the Bush administration create a consensus on an interventionist U.S. foreign policy and effectively ‘kick’ the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome?

President Bush understood that his administration needed to end the Vietnam Syndrome since it prevented the U.S. from intervening in global conflicts, especially within developing countries, and with the New World Order predicated on coalition intervention, the Vietnam Syndrome would have to be ‘kicked’ in order for it work. That is why as a means of defeating the lasting anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome, the Bush administration and U.S. military sold the Persian Gulf War to the

¹⁹² George H.W. Bush, “Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council,” *George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum*, March 1, 1991.

U.S. public, Congress, and the UN as a 'just' war with the rhetoric of the New World Order and the implementation of a media propaganda campaign, which effectively created a consensus on foreign policy through the interventionist New World Order policy. By selling the 'just' war narrative, the Bush administration not only created a consensus on U.S. foreign policy, but it contributed significantly towards combatting the Vietnam Syndrome by breaking Congress's anti-interventionist stance. Furthermore, the Bush administration, along with General Powell and the U.S. military, further 'kicked' the Vietnam Syndrome by attempting to right the mistakes of the Vietnam War. This included, enhancing media pooling within the Gulf, returning to the effective strategies of WWII with the implementation of the Powell Doctrine, which maintained clear-cut objectives within the Gulf that were effectively communicated to the U.S. public. By selling the Persian Gulf War as a 'just' war through a media propaganda campaign which garnered support for an interventionist policy of the New World Order in the Gulf, President Bush addressed some of the perceived mistakes committed during the Vietnam War. In doing so, the Bush administration effectively 'kicked' the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome and re-established the security of western interests through the collective security of the New World Order.

President George H.W. Bush: New World Order Rhetoric

Taking office on January 20, 1989, then Vice President, now President George H.W. Bush sought to re-establish the U.S. as the global leader in collective security. President Bush was the first of the post-Vietnam presidents that did not have to handle, at least for most of his presidency, the looming threat of the Cold War and the potential ramifications of confronting another global superpower. On December 25, 1991, the

Soviet Union officially collapsed, leaving western democracy and the U.S. victorious. However, prior to the Soviet's collapse, he focused his time and attention on talks of strategic arms limitations with President Gorbachev.

During his tenure as vice president to President Reagan, while Reagan pursued a more interventionist foreign policy, Bush held long deliberations with the Soviet Union on strategic arms control. That is why it comes as no surprise why those in Congress and amongst the U.S. public favored Bush's détente strategy of containment with the Soviet Union. From the December 1989 summit in Malta to the June 1990 summit in Washington D.C., Bush and Gorbachev met frequently throughout his first years as president to discuss nuclear disarmament. However, it was not until July 1991 that both Bush and Gorbachev came together in Moscow to sign the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty or START.¹⁹³ Only four months later, President Gorbachev stepped down as president of the Soviet Union marking the end of the 'evil empire.' With the Cold War concluded, and the threat of Soviet repercussions neutralized, President Bush was able to focus his attention on a new rising enemy in the Gulf, which contained the ideal testing ground for his New World Order rhetoric.

With domestic and Congressional support high for Bush, the U.S. seemed confident in his ability to conduct foreign policy. Testing that confidence, on August 8, 1990, Bush addressed the nation on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, calling for the U.S. to once again assume the mantle as the global leader of the free world. Harking back to the

¹⁹³ Stephan Knott, "George H.W. Bush: Foreign Affairs," (UVA: Miller Center, 2018), <https://millercenter.org/president/bush/foreign-affairs> (accessed December 18, 2018).

rhetoric of WWII, Bush hoped to capitalize on what Isaacs called the “the last good war.”¹⁹⁴ Bush first used his rhetorical message of the New World Order in his Address on Iraq’s Invasion of Kuwait, where he stated, “we’re beginning a new era. This new era can be full promise, an age of freedom, a time of peace for all peoples. But if history teaches us anything, it is that we must resist aggression, or it will destroy our freedoms. Appeasement does not work.”¹⁹⁵ Praised early in presidency for his détente policy of strategic arms limitations, Bush switched tactics, no doubt due to the collapse of the Soviet Union, to a stronger position where the U.S. could openly condemn Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. President Bush’s rhetorical message of the New World Order justified America’s commitment to confront global acts of aggression.

On September 11, 1990, President Bush addressed Congress once again on the persistent aggression of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi army’s push towards Saudi Arabia. Defining America’s intentions earlier on, Bush sought to be as clear as possible regarding U.S. intentions in the Gulf and his decision to send elements of the 82nd Airborne to the Gulf. Clear objectives were crucial since much of the U.S. public and Congress were still against military intervention. That is why Bush framed his more aggressive foreign policy in the context of the U.S. assuming leadership of the New World Order, which was the late 20th century’s reinstatement of Wilsonianism. Bush stated,

¹⁹⁴ Arnold R. Isaacs, *Vietnam Shadow: The War, Its Ghosts, and Its Legacy*, (Baltimore MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997): 7.

¹⁹⁵ George H.W. Bush, “Address on Iraq’s Invasion of Kuwait, August 8, 1990” (UVA: Miller Center), <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/august-8-1990-address-iraqs-invasion-kuwait> (accessed December 18, 2019).

Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective—a new world order—can emerge: a new era—freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace... Today that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we've known. A world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle. A world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice... The test we face is great, and so are the stakes. This is the first assault on the new world that we seek, the first test of our mettle. Had we not responded to this first provocation with clarity of purpose, if we do not continue to demonstrate our determination, it would be a signal to actual and potential despots around the world. America and the world must defend common vital interests—and we will. America and the world must support the rule of law—and we will. America and the world must stand up to aggression.¹⁹⁶

President Bush's New World Order rhetoric was an effective and idealistic message that both the American public and Congress could support. As Saddam Hussein continued to ignore the U.S. and international community's call to retreat and cease all aggression, Congress felt obligated to break its tradition of nearly fifteen years of anti-interventionist policy to once again authorize the U.S. military to directly intervene against Saddam's naked aggression. On January 12, 1991, with a vote of 250-183 in the

¹⁹⁶ George H.W. Bush, "Address Before Joint Session of Congress," September 11, 1990, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-veterans-foreign-wars-convention-chicago> (accessed June 11, 2019).

House and a much closer vote of 52-47 in the Senate, President Bush's rhetoric proved successful and allowed the U.S. to once again be willing to use force to protect its national security interests abroad.¹⁹⁷

With the U.S. public, Congress, and the United Nations behind him, the Bush administration launched a significant show of force against the aggression of Saddam Hussein. Exercising each objective with professionalism and determination, the U.S. Armed Forces pushed Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait in less than four days of combat. On February 27, 1991, in his speech announcing the end of the Gulf War, President Bush highlighted the exceptional efforts of the U.S. and coalition forces and spoke to the success of the New World Order: "I am pleased to announce that at midnight tonight eastern standard time, exactly 100 hours since ground operations commenced and 6 weeks since the start of Desert Storm, all United States and coalition forces will suspend offensive combat operations."¹⁹⁸ In alignment with his rhetorical messaging, President Bush didn't claim the win as an unilateral American win, as was the intention for the Vietnam War, but as a global win against aggression. His goal of establishing the New World Order had been achieved: "No one country can claim this victory as its own. It was not only a victory for Kuwait but a victory for all the coalition partners. This is a victory for the United Nations, for all mankind, for the rule of law, and for what is right."¹⁹⁹ With America back at the helm of global security, the Bush

¹⁹⁷ Adam Clymer, "Confrontation in the Gulf; Congress Acts to Authorize War in Gulf; Margins are 5 Votes in Senate, 67 in House," *The New York Times*, January 13, 1991.

¹⁹⁸ George H.W. Bush, "Address on the End of the Gulf War, February 27, 1991" (UVA: Miller Center), <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/february-27-1991-address-end-gulf-war> (accessed June 4, 2019).

¹⁹⁹ H.W. Bush, "Address on the End of the Gulf War."

administration could lead the world into a new era – an era of laws, rules, and international order. Using more than his New World Order rhetoric to garner a consensus on interventionist foreign policy, the Bush administration framed the Persian Gulf War into the only terms they could use to gain support – fighting the ‘just’ war.

Using The ‘Just’ War Narrative: President H.W. Bush’s Propaganda Campaign To Form A Congressional Consensus

The key objective of the Bush administration was to re-establish global security and international law through a revitalized U.N. per the New World Order. To provide global security and enforce international law however, member nations had to be willing to intervene in international conflicts, often within developing world, post-colonial countries. The reality of an apprehensive Congress and a nation held hostage by the lingering anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome forced the Bush administration to recognize that the success or failure of the New World Order depended on their ability to rid the populace of the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. That is why President Bush launched a media manipulation and propaganda campaign that focused on human atrocity stories and branding Saddam Hussein as the new Adolf Hitler so they could frame the Persian Gulf War as a ‘just’ war, the only type of war the American people and the U.N. could support. In doing so, the Bush administration sold the war to the American people, Congress, and the U.N. which allowed President Bush the opportunity to showcase the collective security of the New World Order in action.

In order to sell the Persian Gulf War within the ‘just’ war framework, the Bush administration believed that media manipulation was necessary to rally support for an

aggressive war option which was most certainly the backbone of the New World Order. Media manipulation was made easy when the company hired to cover the war turned out to be deeply connected politically to the government that hired them. Jarol B. Manheim's article, "Strategically Public Diplomacy," published in *Taken by Storm*, reveals that weeks before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Hill and Knowlton (H&K) merged with a consulting firm by the name of Wexler, Reynolds, Fuller, Harrison and Schule, after which, Craig Fuller took command of H&K's Washington branch. Craig Fuller had previously served as Chief of Staff to the Vice President of the United States at the time, George H.W. Bush. Even after Fuller left his position as Chief of Staff, he maintained a connection to the White House, a connection strong enough for Fuller to be asked to organize the 1992 Republican National Convention that re-elected his former boss. Additionally, Fuller frequently visited the White House to discuss political strategies prior to the Iraqi invasion. Fuller stated, "Getting [the Kuwaiti's] message across was completely in line with the goals of the Bush administration. By helping the Kuwaiti citizens, it was clear we would be helping the Bush administration."²⁰⁰ With a close connection to the White House and a personal relationship with the president, H&K was willing to go so far as to fabricate stories of war crimes to help sell the 'just' war narrative.

In an effort to sell the 'just' war narrative of the Gulf War to Congress and the U.N., the Bush administration, along with H&K, conjured up a narrative that sought to motivate Congress and U.N. action against Saddam's aggression. The narrative

²⁰⁰ Jarol Manheim, "Strategic Public Diplomacy," *Taken by Storm*, ed. Lance W. Bennett and David L. Paletz (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994): 143.

originated from a young Kuwaiti girl by the name of Nayirah Al-Sabah who testified before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus that she personally witnessed Iraqi troops committing atrocious human rights violations. In her testimony she states,

I volunteered at eh al-Addan hospital with twelve other women... While I was there, I saw the Iraqi soldiers come into the hospital with a gun and go into the room where 15 babies were in incubators. They took the babies out of the incubators, took the incubators, and left the children to die on the cold floor. It was horrifying.²⁰¹

The personal testimony of Nayirah before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus quickly created an outcry within both Congress and the U.N. to condemn Saddam's barbarity. Her testimony proved vital in persuading the U.N. to send coalition forces to confront Saddam with the United States at the helm. On November 29, 1990, only six weeks after Nayirah testified, the U.N. adopted Resolution 678 that "Authorizes Member States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Resolution 660 and all subsequent resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area."²⁰² Nayirah's testimony, however, was later deemed false by an independent study done by Amnesty International in 1991 and was cited in a Congressional Record to disqualify Hill and Knowlton's very own Lauri Fitz-Pegado from her nomination for Assistant Secretary of Commerce for her part in coaching Nayirah's fabricated testimony. The Congressional Record stated,

²⁰¹ John Porter, *Bob Gray Obit: Nayirah Testimony*, 1990, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?c4496762/bob-gray-obit-nayirah-testimony-1990> (accessed July 18, 2019).

²⁰² The United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 678," November 29, 1990.

Nayirah's emotional testimony riveted human rights organizations, the news media, and the Nation. That incident was cited by six Members of the Senate as reason to go to war with Iraq [...] Since then, every reputable human rights organization and journalist has concluded that the baby incubator story was an outright fabrication. Terrible things were done by the Iraqis, but Nayirah never saw what she said she saw.²⁰³

Not to minimize the reality of atrocities that were indeed committed by the Iraqi regime, Nayirah's story certainly provided a useful piece of manipulation and propaganda that helped sell the 'just' war narrative for military intervention. Douglas Kellner parallels this idea in his book, *The Persian Gulf TV War*, in which he claims, "This baby atrocity story was, therefore, a classic propaganda campaign to manufacture consent for the Bush administration policies."²⁰⁴

Even though many of the stories of Iraqi atrocities used to persuade Congress and the U.N. to intervene proved to be nothing more than propaganda tools, they still managed to get Resolution 678 passed, and with it, the opportunity for the Bush administration to prove the effectiveness of the New World Order. With Congress and the U.N. ready for action, the Bush administration sought to provide the U.S. public with an enemy against whom they could rally against.

²⁰³ *Executive Session*, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record – Senate* 140 (June 16, 1994): 13248, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1994-pt9/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1994-pt9-9-2.pdf> (accessed September 10, 2019).

²⁰⁴ Douglas Kellner, "The 'Crisis in the Gulf' and Mainstream Media," in *the Persian Gulf TV War*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992): 11.

In a study conducted by H&K, they discovered that the American people did not respond as sympathetically to stories of Iraqi atrocities as they did to making an enemy out of Saddam. H&K ultimately concluded that the best strategy for focusing the U.S. public's attention towards intervention was to not only broadcast the atrocities of the Iraqi regime but to demonize Saddam Hussein as well.²⁰⁵ With Saddam Hussein's infamous human rights violations record, President H.W. Bush and his administration sought to link Saddam to an iconic symbol of evil from world history to convey the severity of the threat in the Middle East.

The Bush administration along with H&K used a World War II icon, Adolf Hitler, and compared him to Iraq's dictator, legitimizing Saddam Hussein as a global threat that could not go unchecked. By fashioning Saddam Hussein into the modern-day persona of Hitler, President H.W. Bush was able to spin the Gulf War as a "moral and just war."²⁰⁶ Twisting the Gulf War into a moral war with the primary aim to defeat the modern-day Hitler was exactly the kind of ideology the American people could unify behind. Focusing on Kuwaiti atrocity stories and personifying Saddam as the new Hitler were attempts to use the 'just' war framework to sell the Gulf War. President H.W. Bush also mirrored the attitudes of 'hawks' within his committee that insisted Saddam was an emerging Hitler who needed to be toppled before he became more dangerous to western interests.²⁰⁷ President Bush, however, also took into consideration the feeling of the many 'doves' within his committee that felt that the Persian Gulf War could evolve into a trap

²⁰⁵ Manheim, "Strategic Public Diplomacy," 144.

²⁰⁶ David E. Decosse, *But Was It Just*, (New York: Bantam Doubleday Bell Publishing Group, 1992): 49.

²⁰⁷ Barbara Spellman and Keith Holyoak, "If Saddam is Hitler Then Who Is George Bush? Analogical Mapping Between Systems of Social Roles," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 62, no. 6 (1992): 1.

like Vietnam, with the same outcomes. Ultimately, President Bush was able to persuade the U.S. public as well as many within Congress and other western leaders of the U.N. to accept the World War II analogy as sound with the pragmatic implication of following up with war.²⁰⁸ President Bush himself even equated Saddam's actions to Hitler's in a speech given at the Gubernatorial Luncheon Fundraiser on October 15, 1990:

I heard horrible tales: Newborn babies thrown out of incubators and the incubators then shipped off to Baghdad. Dialysis patients ripped from their machines, and those machines then, too, sent off Baghdad. The story of two young kids passing out leaflet: Iraqi troops rounded up their parents and made them watch while those two kids were shot to death- executed before their eyes. Hitler revisited. But remember, when Hitler's war ended, there were the Nuremberg trials.²⁰⁹

By connecting Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler, both the America people and the international community were made to understand the magnitude of the situation occurring within the Middle East. If gone unchecked, Saddam had the capability to hold the world's energy hostage and demand global power and recognition. Recalling the days of World War II, in which the world's nations came together to defeat the evils of Nazi fascism, the New World Order offered an opportunity for Congress, the U.N., and the U.S. public to rally together against the aggression of Hitler's reincarnation.

²⁰⁸ Spellman and Holyoak, "If Saddam is Hitler Then Who Is George Bush?"

²⁰⁹ George H.W. Bush, "Remarks at a Fundraising Luncheon for Gubernatorial Candidate Clayton Williams in Dallas, Texas," *George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum Public Paper*, October 15, 1990.

President Bush's application of the 'just' war narrative did have its shortcomings, however. In his work, *Selling A 'Just' War*, Michael Butler critiqued President Bush's failure to adequately frame the Persian Gulf War within the terms of a 'just' war framework. Butler claims that "The most accurate characterization of the application of the just war frame in the Gulf War crisis, then, is of a frame that is undoubtedly employed with intent but incoherently."²¹⁰ Butler focused on two primary dimensions for Bush's incoherent use of the 'just' war narrative: inconsistency in the application of the narrative, and lack of a substantive message. First, early on before the start of the war, President Bush based his strong 'just' war message on the Nayirah testimony and Saddam as the new Hitler analogy, but shortly after the war began, he moved onto an underwhelming series of speeches to military families that did not utilize the 'just' war narrative. By failing to focus on the 'just' war narrative consistently through the entirety of the Persian Gulf War, President Bush did not enforce a clear 'just' war narrative according to Butler.

Second, President Bush failed to enforce a clear 'just' war narrative due to his lack of a substantive message. Besides his use of the 'just' war framework, President Bush was also intent on selling other facets of the war that were nonessential to the 'just' war framework including the messaging of 'kicking' the Vietnam Syndrome and advancing the New World Order.²¹¹ Since neither of these messages was central to or reflective of a 'just' war, Butler concludes that the Bush administration strayed from the 'just' war message which confused the intentions behind the overall sale of the Persian

²¹⁰ Michael Butler, *Selling A 'Just' War: Framing, Legitimacy, and U.S. Military Intervention* (London, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 138.

²¹¹ Butler, *Selling A 'Just' War*, 139.

Gulf War. Even though Bush's use of the 'just' war narrative was inconsistent, it had proven effective enough to gain the support of Congress, the UN, and the U.S. public, which ultimately created a consensus on foreign policy with the establishment of the New World Order. Recognizing the thin majority of support for the war, and the devastating toll that the media took during Vietnam, the Bush administration knew that if they were going to maintain public support for the entirety of the war, they needed to control and manipulate the information leaving the Persian Gulf.

Enhancing Domestic Policy: U.S. Military Censorship Through Media Pooling

President H.W. Bush and his administration not only used the collective security rhetoric of the New World Order, but they also used the humanitarian propaganda of H&K and the branding of Saddam Hussein as the reincarnated Adolf Hitler, in an attempt to frame the Persian Gulf War into a 'just' war. The Bush administration also used these methods to gain support and ultimately a consensus on U.S foreign policy with the authorization of military intervention in the Gulf, which they knew would be backed by the U.N. However, gaining a consensus on interventionist foreign policy through the New World Order only resulted in authorization from Congress to go to war. If the global security of the New World Order was to truly 'kick' the Vietnam Syndrome, it would have to successfully meet each of the established objectives in the Gulf. In order to do this, the Bush administration enhanced the U.S. media pooling system within the Gulf as a means to not only control the narrative coming out of the Kuwaiti theater, but also to fix the all-access media catastrophe of the Vietnam War, which fueled the anti-war movement. By controlling the U.S. media through the media pooling system, the Bush administration was also able to continue framing the Persian Gulf War in terms of the

‘just’ war narrative, which further garnered Congressional and U.S. public support for the collective security of the New World Order. Media pools also helped ensure the support of both Congress and the American populace for the Persian Gulf War, otherwise, if Congress or the U.S. public turned against the war, or if the New World Order failed to defeat Saddam Hussein, the Vietnam Syndrome would persist.

The use of media pooling within the Persian Gulf War was not an unheard-of wartime maneuver. Media pooling became a popular U.S. policy after the Vietnam War. The all-access live footage and photographs of the Vietnam War captured by the U.S. media that fueled the anti-war protests made the coverage of any U.S. intervention post-Vietnam comply with strict military review and censorship. Used in Grenada, Lebanon, and Panama, media pooling, by the time of the Persian Gulf War, had become effective at controlling the movement and access of reporters and reports from the theater. However, in the case of the Persian Gulf War, with the success of the New World Order and the objective to ‘kick’ the Vietnam Syndrome on the line, the Bush administration took no chances.

The Bush administration along with the U.S. military enhanced the already effective media pooling system by drastically limiting the number of reporters allowed in the theater, limiting coverage areas, material, interviews, censoring reports, and enforcing twenty-four-hour military escorts. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that, “Not only did all news dispatchers have to clear a ‘security review’ not required since the Korean War, but reporters had to travel in organized pools and be accompanied at all times by military

escort. Journalist said that these escorts often acted as censors.”²¹² Many major media outlets such as the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* publicly opposed such strict access to war reporting. In a report sent to Secretary of State Dick Cheney composed by *CNN*, *ABC*, the *Washington Post* and other major media companies requested that the Persian Gulf War not become the standard model for future war coverage, especially since the report cited cases of reporters being threatened, being placed under military arrest by American troops, and having their reports ‘sanitized’ for political reasons rather than military.²¹³ The negative effects of the enhanced media pooling system were repercussions of maintaining a ‘just’ war narrative and ensuring continued Congressional and U.S. public support for the war. In fact, the Bush administration and the U.S. military bolstered the media pooling system to the point where the U.S. media claimed that during the Persian Gulf War the Pentagon imposed the tightest restrictions on press coverage in American military history.²¹⁴ By imposing such historic restrictions on media coverage of the war, the Bush administration and U.S. military were able to ensure that the Vietnam quagmire was not repeated, securing the success of the New World Order.

Following similar sentiments as the previous report, The *Los Angeles Times* continued to criticize the enhanced media pooling system and its intentions. In his news article, “Pool Reporting: There’s Good News and Bad News,” John Balzar directly connected the Bush administration and U.S. military’s intentions behind enforcing the

²¹² Thomas B. Rosenstiel, “Gulf War No Model for Coverage, Media Tells Pentagon,” *The Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1991.

²¹³ Rosenstiel, “Gulf War No Model for Coverage, Media Tells Pentagon.”

²¹⁴ Rosenstiel, “Gulf War No Model for Coverage, Media Tells Pentagon.”

media pooling system to the lessons learned from Vietnam. Balzar states,

Many of the procedures in the Persian Gulf War, including the requirement that all press pools be escorted by a military public affair professional, clearly reflect the military's widespread belief that the free-ranging tone and vivid details of Vietnam coverage contributed to the anti-war movement in the United States.²¹⁵

Balzar's statement confirms that the Bush administration and U.S. military were consciously implementing an enhanced media pools system within the Gulf to address the mistakes made during the Vietnam War coverage.

Fixing the widespread media coverage mistake from the Vietnam War was only one objective of the media pooling system. Jason DeParle, author of the news article, "Long Series of Military Decisions Led to Gulf War News Censorship," linked the Bush administration and U.S. military's interference with the media pooling system to the support of specific political objectives of the war. DeParle states, "The drafting of Annex Foxtrot was one step in a long march of decisions that, by war's end, left the Government with a dramatically changed policy on press coverage of military operations."²¹⁶ DeParle continued on with, "The policy began with a decision by the administration most senior officials, including President Bush, to manage the information flow in a way that

²¹⁵ John Balzar, "Pool Reporting: There's Good News and Bad News," *The Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1991.

²¹⁶ Jason DeParle, "Long Series of Military Decisions Led to Gulf War News Censorship," *The New York Times*, May 5, 1991.

supported the operation's political goals and avoid the perceived mistakes of Vietnam."²¹⁷ DeParle's news article supports Balzar's claim that the Bush administration and U.S. military were consciously implementing the media pooling system within the Gulf to not only support the war's objectives but to also address the mistakes from Vietnam.

Michael R. Gordon, elaborated further on the media's criticisms of the Pentagon's enforcement of the media pooling system in his *New York Times* article, "Pentagon Seeks Tight Limits on Reporters in Gulf War." According to Gordon, the Pentagon reported that the restrictions would be necessary to protect the security of American military operations in the gulf and to guard the individual privacy of American troops.²¹⁸ Several media executives, however, responded to the Pentagon claiming that "The rules were excessive. They said the restrictions appeared to be aimed at preventing politically damaging disclosures by soldiers and at shielding the America public from the consequences of war."²¹⁹ Gordon's news article follows a line of other reports that corroborate the claim that the enhanced media pooling system in the Gulf was put in place not only to manage the political narrative coming from the Gulf from any damaging press, but to also protect the U.S. public from negative consequences of the war. Further shielding the U.S public and Congress from the consequences of war through the media pooling system, the Bush administration, along with the U.S. military continued to tighten restrictions on not just news reports but, film and photography of the war as well.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Michael R. Gordon, "Pentagon Seeks Tight Limits on Reporters in Gulf War," *The New York Times*, January 4, 1991.

²¹⁹ Gordon, "Pentagon Seeks Tight Limits on Reporters in Gulf War."

An anonymous news article published in the *New York Times* titled “Restriction on War Photos” provides an explanation for the strict censorship of photos and film during the Persian Gulf War. The news article states that “Out of concern for the next of kin, the Pentagon has issued guidelines prohibiting photographers covering the war in the Persian Gulf from taking or transmitting pictures in which the faces of the wounded or dead might be recognizable, and as a result few if any photos of American casualties were taken.”²²⁰ In fact, Scott Applewhite, an A.P. photographer in the theater, reported to the anonymous author that some photographers had been bypassing the pooling system and taking pictures independently which severely annoyed the military authorities to the point where several reporters had their credentials revoked.²²¹ Such strict policy enforcement of the media pooling system within the Gulf, especially when it came to photos of combat injuries or deaths, was a direct attempt by the Bush administration as well as the U.S. military to prevent another Napalm Girl moment.²²² By instituting strict regulations and restrictions on the U.S. media through the media pooling system, the Bush administration and the U.S. military were able to correct the perceived media mistakes of the past and maintain that reports of the war adhered to political objectives of the New World Order and the ‘just’ war narrative. With the most significant mistake from Vietnam remedied, the Bush administration along with the U.S. military sought to mend other failed strategies, such as incremental deployments²²³ and unclear objectives.

²²⁰ *The New York Times*, “Restriction on War Photos,” February 1, 1991.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² The iconic Vietnamese girl in Nick Ut’s *Terror of War* photo previously mentioned in chapter one.

²²³ See the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Military Health History Pocket Card.
<https://www.va.gov/OAA/pocketcard/m-vietnam.asp>.

Addressing Additional Mistakes From The Vietnam War: The Powell Doctrine And Bush's Clear-Cut Objectives

Controlling the media was a necessity for the Bush administration to not only frame the war in terms that were favorable to both the U.S. military and the government, but to ensure the success of the New World Order. Making a return to past successes, in a decision supported by the Bush administration, the U.S. military commanded by General and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Bush administration, Colin Powell, scrapped the strategy of incremental deployments and embraced the tried and true deployment strategies from World War II. The Powell Doctrine, combined with President H.W. Bush's clear-cut objectives supported by a coalition force, allowed the New World Order to address several other mistakes made during the Vietnam War.

Returning to the Blitzkrieg military strategy of WWII, the media labeled the Powell Doctrine the backbone of the Persian Gulf War. The Powell Doctrine was based on the premise that when the U.S. used its military force it did so with overwhelming force, only in the service of vital national security interests, and only after an extensive statistical cost-benefit analysis which provided policymakers with realistic political objectives.²²⁴ The Powell Doctrine is a strategy that could win over the U.S. public since it provided the peace of mind of a defined exit strategy, preventing a potentially long drawn out quagmire.²²⁵ The removal of incremental deployments that caused a lack of unit cohesiveness, combined with the addition of statistical support for estimating vital interests with a clear exit strategy were all ways in which the Powell Doctrine sought to

²²⁴ Michael Cohen, "The Powell Doctrine's Enduring Relevance," *World Politics Review* (July 22, 2009).

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

fix the strategic mistakes of the Vietnam War. The Powell Doctrine was further predicated on an "interest-based decision to intervene based on a catalog of criteria for the proper execution of military intervention."²²⁶ Besides a clear exit strategy and the requirement of acting in the nation's best interests, other criteria included the number of troops deployed, which had to correspond to their mission, the consistent re-evaluation of the size, composition, and disposition of the troops, and the stipulation that the operation required the support from both Congress and the U.S. public.²²⁷ In his article for the *Los Angeles Times*, "Putting the Vietnam Syndrome to Rest," Harry Summers Jr. commented on the end of the Vietnam Syndrome and how the Powell Doctrine helped President Bush 'kick' its lasting effects. He stated,

The payoff of all this training was Operation Desert Storm and the blitzkrieg that destroyed Hussein's army. An old joke best explained by Gen. H Norman Schwarzkopf's miraculous victory: 'How do you get to Carnegie Hall?' asked a tourist, Schwarzkopf replied, 'Practice, man, practice.'²²⁸

Summers not only referenced the strategies of World War II in the application of the Powell Doctrine in the Gulf, but also simultaneously highlighted the U.S. military's remediation of strategic mistakes of the Vietnam War. In support of the Powell Doctrine and its strategy, President Bush openly communicated to Congress and the U.S. public, the goals and objectives of the Persian Gulf War and how they lined up with the New

²²⁶ Alexander Wolf, "U.S. Interventions Abroad: A Renaissance of the Powell Doctrine?" *Statistics Studies Quarterly* (2009): 126.

²²⁷ Wolf, "U.S. Interventions Abroad," 126.

²²⁸ Harry Summers Jr., "Putting Vietnam Syndrome to Rest," *The Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1991.

World Order.

In a show of full support of the Powell Doctrine and presenting a united front between the White House, the U.S. military, and Congress, an image that had been lost during the Vietnam War, President Bush informed the country of America's decision to intervene in the Gulf. On August 8, 1990, President Bush announced in his Address on Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait, that he had commanded the 82nd Airborne Division as well as several key U.S. Air Force detachments to Saudi Arabia to take up a defensive position against Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Army.²²⁹ Once again drawing a parallel to World War II, Bush condemned the Iraqi military's blitzkrieg invasion of Kuwait, all the while though as he prepared for a blitzkrieg of his own with Operation Desert Storm. He stated early in his speech the clear objectives of the war:

Four simple principles guide our policy. First, we seek the immediate, unconditional, and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Second, Kuwaiti's legitimate government must be restored to replace the puppet regime. And third, my administration, as has been the case with every President from President Roosevelt to President Reagan, is committed to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf. And fourth, I am determined to protect the lives of American citizens abroad.²³⁰

By listing clear and direct objectives, President Bush directly communicated to

²²⁹ George H.W. Bush, "Address on Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait," *The George H.W. Presidential Library and Museum*, August 8, 1990.

²³⁰ Bush, "Address on Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait."

the U.S. public his exact reasons for deciding to intervene as well as his support for the Powell Doctrine which ultimately proved successful against Saddam and permitted the success of the New World Order. President Bush clarified his decision to intervene in the Gulf further by stating:

Let me be clear: The sovereign independence of Saudi Arabia is of vital interest to the United States. This decision, which I share with congressional leadership, grows out of longstanding friendship and security relationship between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.²³¹

Driving his point home, President Bush concluded with,

I want to be clear about what we are doing and why. America does not seek conflict, nor do we seek to chart the destiny of other nations. But America will stand by her friends. The mission of our troops is wholly defensive. Hopefully, they will not be needed long.²³²

President Bush's objective early in the war was to be clear and distinct with the goals and objectives of the war and provide continued reassurance of U.S. intentions in the Gulf, something that had been amiss during the Vietnam War. Bush also aimed to mirror the objectives of the Powell Doctrine and demonstrate his support and commitment to a unified strategy. His rhetorical support for the Powell Doctrine not only went a long way to fixing the mistakes of Vietnam but to the ultimate victory over

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

Saddam and the Iraqi regime.

President Bush's desire from his August 8th speech that the war would end swiftly and the soldiers would not need to remain in the Gulf for long ultimately came true. Declared one of the quickest and most decisive wars in U.S. history, the Persian Gulf War in its entirety lasted less than a year, and the time spent in actual combat was even less. Per President Bush's February 27th 1991 address at the end of the Gulf War: "Exactly 100 hours since ground operations commenced and 6 weeks since the start of Desert Storm, all United States and coalition forces will suspend offensive combat operations."²³³ He opened his victory address by directly stating that all U.S. objectives in the Gulf had been met. Kuwait had been liberated, the Iraqi army defeated, all military objectives were met, and the legitimate government of Kuwait was re-instated and back in the hands of the Kuwaitis.²³⁴ With all objectives met, President Bush infamously declared, "America and the world drew a line in the sand. We declared that the aggression against Kuwait would not stand. And tonight, America and the world have kept their word."²³⁵ By fixing the media issue leftover from Vietnam through stricter media pooling and limited coverage material, successfully selling the 'just' war narrative of the war to gain support from Congress, the U.S. public and the U.N., and fixing the strategic military issues by implementing the Powell Doctrine and employing coalition forces, the trial run of the New World Order had proved successful, helping 'kick' the Vietnam Syndrome and re-establish America's ability to intervene in developing world

²³³ George H.W. Bush, "Address to the End of the Gulf War," *The George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum*, February 27, 1991.

²³⁴ H.W. Bush, "Address to the End of the Gulf War."

²³⁵ Ibid.

conflicts. Approval for the Gulf War from both Congress and the U.N. allowed the Bush administration to create a consensus on U.S. foreign policy in the New World Order, and support from the U.S. public played a significant part in ‘kicking’ the Vietnam Syndrome by realtering the Vietnam Era’s cultural shift of war back to one with a favorable view of intervention.

Realtering The Cultural Shift Of War And The Yellow Ribbion Movement

From President Ford to President H.W. Bush, every post-Vietnam era president did his part to try and alter the U.S. public’s collective cultural view of war back towards an aggressive interventionist agenda. However, it was not until Bush’s presidency that the U.S. public’s cultural view would be challenged with the upcoming Persian Gulf War. That is why President Bush not only used fake atrocity stories and Hitler analogies to provide evidence, but he also used the personal stories of soldiers and a National Victory Celebration Military Parade that honored returning soldiers to create support for soldiers and the U.S. military. In doing so, President Bush fixed another lingering issue from the Vietnam War and fostered a positive image of the U.S. military in the eyes of the American public and garnered significant support for the war, but especially for the troops. President Bush’s rhetoric proved enough to alter America’s collective cultural view of war towards intervention with nationwide efforts to support soldiers like the yellow ribbon movement which countered the shouts of protesters of the war. The movement that equated anti-war protests to anti-soldier sentiments effectively demonstrated the U.S. public’s realtered cultural view of war.

First emerging throughout the U.S. in 1981 as a sign of support for the hostages still held in Iran, the yellow ribbon movement became a nationwide symbol of

recognition and support. The movement was not limited to supporting hostages overseas, however, as its core message of support made it applicable to any 'just' cause. President Bush's patriotic fervor and willingness to lead by example and his call to the American people to support the war against naked aggression led to the emergence of yellow ribbons in support of soldiers overseas. In fact, during the Persian Gulf War, the yellow ribbon movement took on yet another representation: anti-protest. Since President Bush needed to maintain the U.S. public's support for the men and women fighting the war and keep them favorable to intervention per the New World Order, he focused on revitalizing the patriotic spirit of America and reestablishing America's belief in its military through its soldiers. Therefore, when anti-war protests began to rise due to the impending invasion, people nationwide countered the anti-war protests by wrapping the U.S. in a yellow ribbon from coast to coast.

People like Sybil Roberts, whose nephew was deployed in the Gulf, were outraged at the anti-war protesters walking door to door asking for signatures to petition the war. In protest to their protest, Roberts wrapped her entire porch in yellow ribbons and even planted a sign in her front lawn that read on one side "We support the troops," and on the other, "Down with protesting."²³⁶ Differing from previous uses of the yellow ribbon, the use of it during the Gulf War took on an anti-protest agenda and equated anti-war protests to anti-soldier. Previously during the Vietnam War, the anti-war protest had also evolved into anti-soldier and anti-veteran protests to less social backlash. Barbra

²³⁶ Alessandra Stanly, "War in the Gulf: Home Front; War's Ribbons are Yellow with Meaning of Many Hues," *The New York Times*, February 3, 1991.

Kone of Carline, New York expressed her concerns when she stated, "I don't want us to get into the blame the soldier's problem that happened during Vietnam."²³⁷ Others like Trish Shuh believed that one could "oppose the policy and still support the troops."²³⁸ Whenever she attended an anti-war rally she pinned a yellow ribbon to her blouse in support of her uncle and brother who were deployed in the Gulf. Her sentiment, however, did not resonate with most Americans.

If the intention of demonstrations was not to stir the wrath of the majority of Americans who, polls show, support the war, it didn't seem to work. 'A lot of callers are angry that we're reporting on the protests,' said Jim McConnell, news director of KGO news talk radio in San Francisco. 'As soon as we do a report, we get a half dozen calls right away.'²³⁹

In fact, most calls that came in were in favor of the war and were from folks who wanted to express their pride and patriotism. According to Gil Gross, a radio host on WOR in New York,

My calls today were 20-1 in favor of the war...it was amazing. Leading up to the war, they were running 3-1 against. I've never seen such a turnaround so fast. If the accents weren't the same, I would have sworn I was in a different city, doing a different show.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Stanly, "War in the Gulf: Home Front."

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Paul Taylor, "Pro-and Anti-War Feelings Expressed Across Nations," *The Washington Post*, January 18, 1991.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

These testimonies lend evidence to the fact that by the conclusion of the Persian Gulf War, the Bush administration was able to successfully alter the collective cultural view of war back towards interventionism.

From his August 8th speech addressing the beginning of the Persian Gulf War to his speech on February 27th addressing the conclusion of the war, President Bush focused heavily on commemorating and supporting the men and women fighting overseas. President Bush not only praised the commanding generals but also spoke highly of the military as a whole, highlighting specific soldiers who had distinguished themselves during the war. President Bush, for example, in an address before Congress on September 11, 1990, chose to address all three accounts stating,

At this moment, our brave servicemen and women stand watch in that distant desert and on distant seas, side by side with the forces of more than 20 other nations. They are some of the finest men and women of the United States of America. And they're doing one terrific job.²⁴¹

He continued on to highlight a specific soldier,

Private First Class Wade Merritt of Knoxville, Tennessee, now stationed in Saudi Arabia, wrote his parents of his worries, his love of family, and his hope for peace. But Wade also wrote, "I am proud of my country and its firm stance against inhumane aggression. I am proud of my army and its men. I am proud to

²⁴¹ George H.W. Bush, "Address before a Joint Session of Congress," *The George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum*, September 11, 1990.

serve my country." Well, let me just say, Wade, America is proud of you and is grateful to every soldier, sailor, marine, and airman serving the cause of peace in the Persian Gulf.²⁴²

President Bush ended this segment of his address by acknowledging his advisors and generals:

I also want to thank the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Powell; the Chiefs here tonight; our commander in the Persian Gulf, General Schwartzkopf; and the men and women of the Department of Defense. What a magnificent job you all are doing. And thank you very, very much from a grateful people.²⁴³

By speaking so highly and passionately about the U.S. military and all its accomplishments and hard work, President Bush led by example to thank and appreciate the soldiers and ranking officials. He encouraged citizens to embrace American patriotism with open arms and reminded them to feel honor and pride in the U.S. military and particularly its soldiers. This sense of national pride was lost during the Vietnam War and in revitalizing the patriotic lifeline of the country, President Bush was able to get the U.S. public to once again embrace their military and all its glory. Nothing embodied this more than President Bush's declaration of the National Victory Celebration Military

²⁴² Bush, "Address before a Joint Session of Congress."

²⁴³ Ibid.

Parade.

On June 7th and 8th in 1991, President Bush along with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell wanted to commemorate the victory of the Persian Gulf War and the success of the New World Order with an extravagant welcome home parade. Nearly 800,000 people crowded the nation's capital for the welcome-home-celebration for the soldiers of Desert Storm.²⁴⁴ Covering multiple days, the event continued as tens of thousands of people packed the mall to marvel at the high-tech weaponry that won the war, set up picnics, and watch fireworks.²⁴⁵ This was a stark difference from the Vietnam Memorial Ceremony where nearly no one attended. The parade also fit neatly into President Bush's World War II playbook. The National Victory Celebration Military Parade bore close resemblance to the Victory Day Parade in 1946 declaring the end to World War II. Furthermore, by having all soldiers deployed and returned home together, especially to a parade in their honor, the nation was able to easily move past the war unlike the traumatizing post-Vietnam era. By supporting and commemorating soldiers and the U.S. military in his rhetoric, along with the extravagant show of victory with the National Victory Celebration Military Parade, President Bush helped foster a nationwide sense of patriotism and support for the troops.

Throughout the post-Vietnam era, presidents worked adamantly to shake the isolationist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on the U.S. public, Congress, and U.S. foreign policy. It was not until the success of the Persian Gulf War and the New World Order that the Bush administration along with the U.S military were able to 'kick' the

²⁴⁴ Mary Jordan and DeNeen L. Brown, "On the Mall: The Celebration Lingers," *The Washington Post*, June 10, 1991.

²⁴⁵ Mary Jordan and DeNeen L. Brown, "On the Mall: The Celebration Lingers."

lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome and usher in a new era of global security.

Chapter Three Conclusion

President Bush understood that he and his administration needed to ‘kick’ the Vietnam Syndrome since it prevented the U.S. from intervening in global conflicts, especially in the developing world, and with the New World Order predicated on coalition intervention, the Vietnam Syndrome would have to be ‘kicked’ in order for it to be successful. Therefore, as a means of defeating the lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome, President Bush, his administration, and the U.S. military sold the Persian Gulf War to the American people, Congress, and the UN by enhancing U.S. domestic policy through a propaganda and media censorship campaign with the objective to rally public, congressional, and international support for the Persian Gulf War, which, upon its success, created a consensus on foreign policy to establish the New World Order and re-establish America’s faith and security abroad. President H.W. Bush along with General Powell and the U.S. military played straight from the WWII playbook to remedy the lingering mistakes of the Vietnam War in order to win the Persian Gulf War. The victory not only restored America’s faith in Washington’s ability to effectively achieve national security objectives and conduct military intervention abroad, it also reestablishing America’s faith, pride, and support in its military, something that was greatly lost during the post-Vietnam era. The Bush administration’s propaganda and military censorship campaign effectively neutralized the lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome by shifting the U.S. public’s collective cultural view of war back towards a policy of favoring intervention within the framework of the New World Order.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis the argument has been made that the Vietnam Syndrome had several distinguishable effects on not only the U.S. public, but also on foreign and domestic policy decisions between 1975 and 1991. First, the Vietnam Syndrome had a significant cultural effect on the American public which altered the country's collective cultural view of war from an interventionist to an anti-interventionist stance. Naturally, this shift in public perception influenced U.S. presidents' foreign and domestic policy decisions from President Gerald Ford to President George H.W. Bush. Second, the Vietnam Syndrome's anti-interventionist effect challenged the established security of containment policy through military intervention, forcing presidents and their administrations to implement different rhetorical approaches and messages to unshackle, in their view, America from the anti-interventionist effects of the Vietnam Syndrome on foreign policy decisions. Third, as a means to defeat the lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome, the Bush administration and the U.S. military enhanced U.S. domestic policy through a multi-stage propaganda and media censorship campaign to rally public, congressional, and international support for the Persian Gulf War; which, upon America's victory in the war, established the New World Order and re-established America's security abroad.

Moreover, this thesis addresses three specific research questions that are at the core of this paper. First, what exactly is the Vietnam Syndrome and how did it affect the U.S. public? Second, how did each post-Vietnam era president deal with the lasting

effects of the Vietnam Syndrome? Lastly, how were President Bush and his administration able to ‘kick’ the Vietnam Syndrome and establish a consensus on interventionist foreign policy? While each of these questions examines a specific aspect of the Vietnam Syndrome and its effects on America during the post-Vietnam era, together, the corresponding answers frame a clear and concise evidence-based narrative that the Vietnam Syndrome did, in fact, have a tangible hold on the U.S. public and foreign and domestic policy during the post-Vietnam era. Each chapter of this thesis is devoted to a corresponding research question above.

Chapter one attempted to explain the origin of the Vietnam Syndrome and its effect on the U.S. public. The use of newspapers as well as scholarly sources helped define the Vietnam Syndrome as the unwillingness of Americans and Congress to intervene or involve America in the affairs of developing world countries. As described in detail, there were a multitude of events that led to the creation of the Vietnam Syndrome, and by clearly defining the Vietnam Syndrome, one can then examine its isolationist influence on the U.S. public. The Vietnam Syndrome altered the collective cultural view of war from an interventionist approach in foreign policy towards an isolationist stance. Moreover, the Vietnam Syndrome further influenced society by exposing the American dualist mentality within the country. On the one hand, America flaunted its ideologies of freedom, humanitarianism, and the right to self-determination, while on the other, it enforced the ideology of acting as the policeman of the world, responsible for ensuring global security through intervention. It is important to understand the effect of the Vietnam Syndrome on America because in a constitutional federal republic, if the people rise in opposition and popular opinion falls out of favor,

completing foreign policy objectives like winning the Vietnam War, becomes difficult. This dualist narrative was not only represented in the newspaper articles of the time but also within the entertainment industry.

Following the dual narrative of the U.S. public, Hollywood mirrored the sentiments of society by promoting both revisionist and realist narratives of the Vietnam War. Revisionist films such as *Rambo* (1982, 1985, 1988) and *Missing in Action* (1984, 1985, 1988) attempted to rewrite the 'losing' narrative of the Vietnam War in order to preserve the policeman ideology that kept the U.S. public in favor of an interventionist foreign policy. In contrast, realist films such as *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and *Platoon* (1986) represented the real trauma that the Vietnam War inflicted on the American populace and the people of Southeast Asia, further illustrating the American dualist ideology. This prompted the president at the time, Ronald Reagan, to personally endorse the revisionist narrative of *Rambo*, due to the parallels drawn between Rambo and Reagan, especially through President Reagan's tough stance on communism. President Reagan fully understood the influence of Hollywood on the U.S. public from his time as president of the Screen Actors Guild where he and others adamantly fought to prevent the presence of communist propaganda in Hollywood. By endorsing the revisionist narrative, President Reagan's rhetoric and actions either inadvertently or intentionally, helped rewrite the damaging realist narrative of the Vietnam War in an effort to combat the lasting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome, which was explored in greater detail in chapter two.

Building on chapter one's question, chapter two sought to demonstrate how each post-Vietnam era president attempted to defeat the lasting effects of the Vietnam

Syndrome. Since the Vietnam Syndrome prevented post-Vietnam era presidents from conducting foreign policy through an interventionist strategy, which was the preferred way to defeat the spread of Soviet communism, each president used different rhetorical messages to shift the cultural attitude of war back towards an interventionist policy and unshackle the presidency from the limiting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome. As chapter two reveals, President Ford, the first of the post-Vietnam era presidents, held the unique position of serving as the first president who had to deal with the limiting effects of the Vietnam Syndrome, which prompted his dual approach in his rhetoric. Through his rhetoric, President Ford sought to present a strong front against the Soviet Union – one in which America, though badly wounded from the Vietnam War, was not going to relinquish its international duties as the policeman of the world. However, he also needed to tread lightly to appease the general public and Congress who wanted to quit meddling in world affairs, so his rhetoric concentrated on healing the wounds inflicted by the Vietnam War. President Ford's rhetoric spoke hollow words to most of America's allies including U.N. and NATO forces while focusing most of his rhetoric on addressing the domestic wounds from Vietnam. President Ford's dual narrative approach failed to secure him a second term however, and he lost the 1976 election to then-Senator Jimmy Carter's alluring message of peace.

Unlike President Ford's dual message, President Carter sought to re-establish the U.S. public, Congress, and the world's faith in America as the peace brokers rather than the policeman of the world. President Carter fulfilled his rhetorical promises by brokering peace in the Middle East between Egypt and Israel in the 1978 Camp David Accords. By re-branding America, President Carter re-established faith in the U.S. government's

ability to conduct foreign policy in accordance with the moral, ethical, and ideological principles established under Wilsonianism and the United Nations. President Carter's rhetoric drastically helped re-alter the U.S public's collective cultural view of war back towards one open to the idea of intervention. Proving that the U.S. was capable of brokering peace between warring nations demonstrated to the U.S. public and the world that the U.S. was more than an imperialistic war machine. With faith restored in America's ability to conduct foreign policy, the American people elected a new president with a new rhetorical message that once again resonated with the people – opposition to the spread of communism.

Maintaining his well-established anti-communist sentiments, President Ronald Reagan won the 1980 election largely due to his tough stance on communism and through his objective to reinstate U.S. global dominance through intervention. President Reagan's rhetoric attempted to tackle the limiting effects that the Vietnam Syndrome continued to hold on his administration's ability to prevent the spread of Soviet communism. However, the Reagan administration soon found themselves in the same limiting situation as President Ford years earlier when they discovered their inability to physically intervene and aid their allies due to the lingering presence of the Vietnam Syndrome. That is why to shift the cultural view of war back towards intervention and deliver on his campaign promises, President Reagan illegally side-stepped Congress and disregarded the recently re-established Wilsonian image in order to support covert operations against communist insurgencies in areas of Central America, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East that were considered vital to national security. From America's involvement in the Soviet-Afghan War to the historical blunder of the Iran-Contra

Scandal, President Reagan proved throughout his two terms in office that he would never hold the reputation of appearing weak in the face of communism. However, by the conclusion of his two terms in office, residual effects of the Vietnam Syndrome remained as seen by the lack of a Congressional consensus on interventionist policy.

The last of the post-Vietnam era presidents, President George H.W. Bush, held a unique position reminiscent to that of President Ford. President Bush was praised for his foreign policy relations with the Soviets as vice president of the Reagan administration, however, by his first year in office, the Soviet Union had fallen, and the looming threat of the Cold War had disappeared. With the Soviet Union no longer a threat to the U.S. it appeared that global security through intervention could return. However, the fall of one threat allowed for the rise of another, and in this case, it was the rise of Saddam Hussein and the threat to global energy security in the Persian Gulf. Even with the fall of the Soviet Union and the threat of Soviet retaliation no longer a concern, both the U.S. public and Congress were still unwavering in their preference for isolationism with respect to refraining from intervention in developing world conflicts. With the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome still lingering, President Bush used the rhetorical message of the New World Order to rally support for intervention and re-alter America's collective cultural view of war.

Combining the collective security and self-determination ideology of the League of Nations with the humanitarian and international laws of the U.N., President Bush established the New World Order. The best of both global organizations and the teeth of collective security backed by the humanitarian rule of law perfectly reflected the American dualist ideology. On January 12, 1991, President H.W. Bush's rhetoric proved

successful and the *Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution* was passed by a minor majority. Congress, along with the backing of the U.N. and the U.S. public, voted to allow the Bush administration complete freedom to re-establish the sovereign and legitimate government of Kuwait and secure the flow of oil from the Gulf, and less than a month later, President Bush announced he had instructed the U.S. military to intervene in the Gulf.

Chapter three aimed to examine more closely how President Bush managed to ‘kick’ the Vietnam Syndrome and create a consensus within Congress on foreign policy objectives. It is clear throughout chapter two that each post-Vietnam president had to deal with the limiting effects of Vietnam Syndrome to varying degrees. President Reagan arguably experienced the most limitations due to his overtly interventionist agenda, but despite his efforts, even he could not gain the full support of the U.S. public or Congress due to the continued influence of the Vietnam Syndrome. So, how did President Bush manage?

The Bush administration, along with the U.S. military was able to ‘kick’ the Vietnam Syndrome and provide a consensus on foreign policy through the New World Order by successfully selling the Persian Gulf War to the American people, Congress, and the U.N. after enhancing U.S. domestic policy through a propaganda and media censorship campaign, which upon its success, effectively re-established America’s faith in its military and its security abroad. Furthermore, President Bush along with General Powell implemented strategies straight from the WWII playbook that avoided the mistakes of the Vietnam War to win the Persian Gulf War. His successful propaganda

and military censorship campaign helped ensure America's victory in the Gulf, and the re-establishment of global security with the U.S. at the helm.

The following implications can be drawn from the research provided within this thesis. It is not enough for the U.S. public to protest military intervention by relying on the Vietnam Syndrome and expect that their efforts will continue to prevent the U.S. government from enacting interventionist policy. If they are to ensure that their government does not fall prey to imperial excesses and anti-democratic tendencies, they must educate itself and promote awareness of the professional realm of politics in order to understand the reasoning for *realpolitik* methods behind foreign diplomacy decisions. Presidents and their administrations not only have their own agendas and objectives that they want to accomplish as president, but they typically represent larger political strategies, like containment policy, that must also be considered when forming and implementing policy. Between their personal agenda, their party's agenda, and their constituent's agenda, the interests of the U.S. public can, and usually does, get pushed aside. With more education on the realities of the American professional political system, however, the American populace could more readily fight for their interests instead of trusting completely in their elected officials.

Furthermore, the U.S. public must enter the professional realm of politics for the effects of the Vietnam Syndrome to diminish over time. As shown in this thesis, from President Ford to President Bush, each used strategic rhetorical messages to challenge the Vietnam Syndrome and persuade the American populace back towards a favorable view of interventionist policy per containment policy. Instead of relying on protests of public opinion which fade over time, the U.S. public instead should educate themselves in the

realm of modern professional politics to better compete or protect their interests against the tides of time and the interests of the parties. Education in the realm of modern professional politics leads to greater resistance to manipulation and propaganda like in the case of the Persian Gulf War. If the U.S. public would not have relied on the continued isolating effects of the Vietnam Syndrome they could have more effectively challenged President Bush's propaganda campaign and recognized that the Persian Gulf War was less about recognizing and opposing the new personification of Hitler and more about securing America's regional stability, energy, and economic interests abroad. The American people must value educating themselves on the intricacies of the modern political system or else resign themselves to its very whim.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary

Apocalypse Now. DVD. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola. 1979; USA: Lionsgate, 2010.

Arnett, Peter, "Grime Decision for Military: 'It Became Necessary to Destroy Town to Save It,' *The Danville Register*, February 8, 1968.

Balzar, John. "Pool Reporting: There's Good News and Bad News." *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1991.

Born on the 4th of July. DVD. Directed by Oliver Stone. 1989; USA: Universal Studios.

Bush, George H.W. "Address on Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait." *George H.W. Presidential Library and Museum*, August 8, 1990.

Bush, George H.W. "Address to the End of the Gulf War." *George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum*, February 27, 1991.

Bush, George H.W. "August 8, 1990: Address on Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait." *UVA: Miller Center*.

Bush, George H.W. "February 27, 1991: Address on the End of the Gulf War." *UVA: Miller Center*.

Bush, George H.W. "Remarks at a Fundraising Luncheon for Gubernatorial Candidate Clayton Williams in Dallas, Texas." *George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum Public Paper*, October 15, 1990.

Bush, George H.W. "Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council." *George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum*, March 1, 1991.

Bush, George H.W. "September 11, 1990: Address before a Joint Session of Congress." *UVA: Miller Center*.

Carter, Jimmy. "Camp David Accords." *Speech Vault*, September 18, 1978.

- Carter, Jimmy. "Inaugural Address of President Jimmy Carter." *The American Presidency Project*, January 20, 1977.
- Carter, Jimmy. "State of the Union Address." *The American Presidency Project*, January 23, 1979.
- Carter, Jimmy. "The State of the Union Address Delivered Before the Joint Session of the Congress." *The American Presidency Project*, January 23, 1980.
- Carter, Jimmy. "Presidential Directive/NSC-18." *U.S. National Strategy*, August 24, 1977.
- Carter, Jimmy. "Presidential Directive/NSC-30." *Human Rights*, February 17, 1978.
- Center for Justice and Accountability, "El Salvador," 2016.
- Central Intelligence Agency. *Human Resource Exploitation Training Manual*, June 8, 1988.
- Central Intelligence Agency. Directorate of Intelligence. *Soviet Thinking on the Possibility of Armed Confrontation with the United States*, December 30, 1983.
- Clymer, Adam. "Confrontation in the Gulf; Congress Acts to Authorize War in Gulf; Margins are 5 Votes in Senate, 67 in House." *New York Times*, January 13, 1991.
- Cockburn, Alexander. "Unlimited Violence Wins Out." *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 1991.
- Cohen, Richard. "The Soviets' Vietnam." *The Washington Post*, April 22, 1988.
- DeParle, Jason. "After the War; Long Series of Military Decisions Led to Gulf War News Censorship." *New York Times*, May 5, 1991.
- Ford, Gerald R. "Address at Tulane University Convocation." *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*, April 23, 1975.
- Ford, Gerald R. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress Reporting on the State of the Union." *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum*, January 12, 1977.

- Ford, Gerald R. "Address by President Ford, Gerald R. before a Joint Session of Congress Reporting on United States Foreign Policy." *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*, April 10, 1975.
- Ford, Gerald R. "Remarks Announcing a Program for the Return of Vietnam Era Draft Evaders and Military Deserters." *The American Presidency Project*, September 16, 1974.
- Full Metal Jacket*. DVD. Directed by Stanley Kubrick. 1987; USA: Warner Bros., 2007.
- Geyelin, Philip. "Remembering Veterans, Forgetting a War." *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 1981.
- Gitlin, Todd. "Not So Fast into the Iraq Syndrome." *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1991.
- Gordon, Michael R. "Pentagon Seeks Tight Limits on Reporters in Gulf War." *The New York Times*, January 4, 1991.
- Hoover, Eleanor. "Veterans Having Adjustment Woes." *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1976.
- Johnson, Lyndon B. "Remarks in Memorial Hall, Akron University." *The American Presidency Project*, October 21, 1964.
- Jordan, Mary and DeNeen L. Brown. "On the Mall: The Celebration Lingers." *Washington Post*, June 10, 1991.
- Kennan, George to George Marshall. "The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State," February 22, 1946.
- Kinsley, Michael. "From Rambo to Platoon." *Washington Post*, February 18, 1987.
- Kissinger, Henry A. "National Security Decision Memorandum 293: US Approach toward Enhancing the Allied Contribution to the Defense of NATO." *National Security Council*, May 3, 1975.
- Lelyveld, Joseph. "The Enduring Legacy." *New York Times Magazine*, March 31, 1985.
- Lemoyne, James. "U.S. Considers Sending Gun Ships to El Salvador." *New York Times*, September 1, 1984.

Los Angeles Times. "Another War? Food for Thought." March 4, 1981.

McManus, Doyle. "Public's Attention Returns to Issues of War and Peace." *Los Angeles Times*, December 20, 1983.

Memo Ronald Reagan from the Committee on Un-American Activities. U.S. House of Representatives, September 2, 1947.

Memorandum for Record. *Meeting with the President, Vice President, Secretary Schultz, DCI Casey, Attorney General Meese, Don Reagan, Admiral Poindexter, and Al Keel in Oval Office*, November 10, 1986.

Missing in Action. DVD. Directed by James Bruner. 1984; USA: MGM, 2000.

National Archives. *Vietnam War U.S. Military Fatal Casualty Statistics*, April 29, 2008.

New York Times. "War in the Gulf; Restriction on War Photos." February 1, 1991.

Nixon, Richard M. "Victimization Speech." *American History*, November 3, 1969.

Pear, Robert. "Arming Afghan Guerrillas: A Huge Effort Led by the U.S." *New York Times*, April 18, 1988.

Platoon. DVD. Directed by Oliver Stone. 1986; USA: MGM, 2000.

Porter, John. "Bob Gray Obit: Nayirah Testimony," 1990.

President Special Review Board. "Report of the President Special Review Board," February 26, 1987.

Rambo: First Blood II. DVD. Directed by Paul P. Cosmatos. 1985; USA: Lionsgate, 2004.

Reagan, Ronald. "Addresses a Joint Session of the Congress on Central America." *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, April 23, 1983.

Reagan, Ronald. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union." *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, February 6, 1985.

Reagan, Ronald. "Address to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention in Chicago." *The American Presidency Project*, August 18, 1980.

- Reagan, Ronald. "Iran-Contra Address to the Nation, Oval Office of the White House, Washington D.C." *AmericanRhetoric.com*, March 4, 1987.
- Reagan, Ronald. *National Security Directive Decision 5: Conventional Arms Transfers Policy*, July 8, 1981.
- Reagan, Ronald. *National Security Decision Directive 75: U.S. Relations With the USSR*, January 17, 1983.
- Reagan, Ronald. *National Security Decision Directive 83, U.S. Policy Initiatives to Improve Prospects for Victory in El Salvador*, February 24, 1983.
- Reagan, Ronald. *National Security Directive Decision 100, Enhanced U.S. Military Activity and Assistance for the Central American Region*, July 28, 1983.
- Reagan, Ronald. *National Security Decision Directive 124, Central America: Promoting Democracy, Economic Improvement, and Peace*, February 7, 1984.
- Reagan, Ronald. *National Security Decision Directive 225, Central America: U.S. Policy on the Search for a Negotiated Solution*, May 20, 1986.
- Reagan, Ronald. *National Security Decision Directive 270: Afghanistan*, May 1, 1987.
- Reagan, Ronald. *National Security Decision Directive/NSD-166: U.S. Policy, Program, and Strategy in Afghanistan*, March 27, 1985.
- Reagan, Ronald. "Remarks at an Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, FL." *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, March 8, 1983.
- Reagan, Ronald. "Remarks on Central America and El Salvador at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers." *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, March 10, 1983.
- Reagan, Ronald. "Remarks During a White House Briefing on the Program for Economic Recovery." *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, February 24, 1981.
- Reagan, Ronald. "Signed Rambo Poster." *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, May 1988.

- Reagan, Ronald. "Televised Address of Governor Ronald Reagan: A Strategy for Peace in the 80s." *Ronald Reagan Museum and Library*, September 19, 1980.
- Reagan, Ronald. "Transcript of Remarks by Reagan about Iran." *New York Times*, November 14, 1986.
- Roosevelt, Franklin D. and Winston Churchill. *Atlantic Charter*, August 14, 1941.
- Rosenstiel, Thomas B. "Gulf War No Model for Coverage, Media Tells Pentagon." *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1991.
- Saad, Lydia. "Gallup Vault: Hawks vs. Doves on Vietnam." *Gallup*, 2019.
- Scowcroft, Brent. "National Security Decision Memorandum 270: Military Assistance for Israel." *National Security Council*, September 24, 1974.
- Scowcroft, Brent. "National Security Decision Memorandum 315: Military Assistance for Israel." *National Security Council*, January 31, 1976.
- Scowcroft, Brent. "National Security Decision Memorandum 322: American Equipment Captured in Indochina." *National Security Council*, March 31, 1976.
- Stanly, Alessandra. "War in the Gulf: Home Front; War's Ribbons are Yellow with Meaning of Many Hues." *New York Times*, February 3, 1991.
- Summers Jr., Harry. "Putting Vietnam Syndrome to Rest." *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1991.
- Strong, Robert A. "Jimmy Carter: Foreign Affairs." *UVA: Miller Center*.
- Taylor, Paul. "Pro-and Anti-War Feelings Expressed Across Nations." *Washington Post*, January 18, 1991.
- United Nations. *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, December 10, 1948.
- United Nations Security Council. *Resolution 678*, November 29, 1990.
- U.S. Congress. Executive Session. *Congressional Record – Senate 140*, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., June 16, 1994. 13248.
- U.S. Department of State. Office of the Historian Bureau of Public Affairs. *Kennan and*

Containment, 1947.

U.S. House of Representatives. *Boland Amendment*, December 1982.

U.S. House of Representatives. *Press Release from the Committee on Un-American Activities*, September 19, 1947.

U.S. House of Representatives. *Ronald Reagan and Albert Maltz Testimony before the Committee on Un-American Activities*, October 21, 1947.

U.S. House of Representatives. The Sub Committee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. *The Peace Process in El Salvador*, March 1993.

U.S. National Archives. History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. *National Security Council Report, NSC 68, "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,"* April 14, 1950. Weinberger, Caspar. *Diary*, December 7, 1985.

White Ghost. DVD. Directed by BJ Davis. 1988; USA: Gibraltar.

Wilson, Woodrow. "Fourteen Points Speech." *Congressional Hearing*, January 8, 1918.

Secondary

Ball, George. *Diplomacy for a Crowded World*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1976.

Boggs Carl and Tom Pollard. *The Hollywood War Machine: U.S. Militarism and Popular Culture*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2007.

Butler, Michael. *Selling A 'Just' War: Framing, Legitimacy, and U.S. Military Intervention*. London, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Cohen, Michael. "The Powell Doctrine's Enduring Relevance." *World Politics Review* (July 22, 2009).

Cooley, John. *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America, and International Terrorism*. Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2002.

Decosse, David E. *But Was It Just?* New York: Bantam Doubleday Bell Publishing Group, 1992.

- Germany, Kent. "Lyndon B. Johnson: Foreign Affairs." *UVA: Miller Center* (2019).
- Gill, Jill K., "Religious Communities and the Vietnam War," in *Vietnam War Era: People and Perspectives*, ed. Mitchell K. Hall and Peter C. Mancall, 97 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009).
- Greene, John Robert. "Gerald Ford: Foreign Affairs." *UVA: Miller Center* (2019).
- Holsti, Ole and James Rosenau. *American Leadership in World Affairs: Vietnam and the Breakdown of Consensus*. London, England: Boston Allen and Unwin, 1984.
- Isaacs, Arnold R. *Vietnam Shadow: The War, Its Ghosts, and Its Legacy*. Baltimore, MA: John Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Kellner, Douglas. "The 'Crisis in the Gulf' and Mainstream Media." Chap. 2 in *The Persian Gulf TV War*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.
- Kennan, George. "The Source of Soviet Conduct." *Foreign Affairs* (July 1947).
- Klare, Michael T. *Beyond the "Vietnam Syndrome: " U.S. Interventionism in the 1980s*. Washington D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1981.
- Knott, Stephan. "George H.W. Bush: Foreign Affairs." *UVA: Miller Center* (2018).
- Korb, Lawrence J. "Spending without Strategy: The FY 1988 Annual Defense Department Report." *International Security* 12, no. 1 (1987).
- Marsella, Anthony J. "The United States of America: 'A culture of war.'" *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (2011).
- Manheim, Jarol. "Strategic Public Diplomacy." Chap. 6 in *Taken by Storm*. Edited by Lance W. Bennett and David L. Paletz. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Nixon, Richard. *No More Vietnams*. New York, NY: Avon Books, 1994.
- Simons, Geoff. *The Vietnam Syndrome: Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy*. London, England: MacMillian Press LTD, 1998.
- Smith, Tom W. "American Attitudes Towards the Soviet Union and Communism." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (1983).

Spellman, Barbara and Keith Holyoak. "If Saddam Is Hitler Then Who Is George Bush?"

Analogical Mapping Between Systems of Social Roles." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 62, no. 6 (1992).

The VoxRox, *Ronald Reagan - Dedication to the Freedom Fighters in Afghanistan*.

March 1982. YouTube video, 35 sec., posted March 31, 2011.

Waller, Gregory A., "Rambo: Getting To Win This Time," in *From Hanoi To*

Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film, ed. Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud, 125 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

Weinberger, Caspar. *Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon*. New

York: NY, Warner Books 1990.

Williams, D.K. "Reagan's Religious Right: The Unlikely Alliance between Southern

Evangelicals and a California Conservative," in *Ronald Reagan and the 1980s: Perceptions, Policies, Legacies*, ed. Cheryl Hudson and Gareth Davies, 137 (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan 2008).

Wolf, Alexander. "U.S. Interventions Abroad: A Renaissance of the Powell Doctrine?"

Statistics Studies Quarterly (2009).