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Operation Provide Comfort for the Kurds in Iraq

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Abstract

The ethnic and religious uprisings against Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq were led by Shiite Arabs in the South and Kurds in the North, incentivized by the U.S.A. and its allies. The uprisings lasted from March to April 1991 directly after a ceasefire creating a halt to the Gulf War. In both the North and the South, Saddam Hussein responded with massacres which created an internal refugee population. At that time, the United States activated their own intended political and humanitarian concept, Operation Provide Comfort. This was a three-phase operation with the purpose of aiding Iraqi Kurds to return to their homeland in Northern Iraq, and later to create a no-fly zone. The present study makes use of unclassified information from the United States Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), such as documents, reports and memoirs. There is almost no attempt at assessment of the viewpoint of Kurdish reactions. Even the Peshmerga (Kurdish for "facing death"), guerilla organizations from the eighteenth century who at the time played a strong role in the North, seem to have been glossed over in the documentation. The conclusion of the present researcher(s) based on what is a one-sided documentation is a surprise and quite admirable!

Keywords: The 1990-1991 Gulf War in Iraq and the ceasefire, uprisings in Northern and Southern Iraq and subsequent massacres, United States Operation Provide Comfort activation, DTIC unclassified United States documents and memoirs, United States military and humanitarian objectives in Iraq

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Introduction

Contingency operations in the Gulf War in Iraq, Operation Provide Comfort I and II were unique in their time. Later on, these two contingency operations would serve as a model in similar circumstances in the Cold War and in Operation Desert Storm.

The characteristics of Operation Provide Comfort in 1991 as outlined by United States General John H. Cushman are as follows Operation Provide Comfort was distinctive, incorporating an unforeseen situation and mission, a heavily multinational forces composition and effort, and a deep involvement of civilian and international agencies critical accomplishment. It also involved sensitive negotiations with Iraqi authorities and a variety of Kurdish leaders, daily media coverage with corresponding high visibility and political impact, and nearly hour-by hour reporting by the task forces commander directly to and receipt of direction and guidance from the Commander-in-Chief in Europe and General John Gavin, USA, who was in turn was the single channel to and from the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff and the National Command Authority (Cowan 1995:7).

To further roughly summarize from both Cowan 1995 and Schiesl 2003 On 28 February 1991, the then President of the United States of America, (George Herbert Walker Bush 20 January-20 January 1993), declared a ceasefire that brought the Gulf War to a halt. Two weeks earlier, he had made a statement that might or might not have played a role in encouraging the Kurdish people in Northern Iraq to rebel against the Saddam Hussein's regime. Responding, the Iraqi people had taken matters into their own hands to force Saddam Hussein the dictator to step aside,' the United States President effectively warned and feasibly inspired the rebellion of the Iraqi populace against the Iraqi government. The rebellion occurred; it was violent and short-lived. At the end of Operation Desert Storm, the Kurdish Peshmerga forces attempted to revolt against the dictatorial rule of Saddam just as the Shiite militia fighters revolted in the Southern part of country. This resulted in Iraqi president Saddam declaring a massive retaliatory assault upon the Shiite populace in the south and Kurdish people residing in the northern part of the country, bringing the ill-fated revolution to swift and summary. This resulted in over one million Kurdish refugees throughout Turkey, Iran, and Iraq.

Goff (1992) explores that the world press and journalists reported that nearly 2,000 Kurdish men, women, children were dying every day in the harsh cold of the Iraqi-Turkish mountains. Scenes of bare feet and poorly clothed Kurdish women and children showed them walking in

snow and frigid temperatures to escape Saddam's vengeance as he crushed their short-lived Kurdish nationalist uprising. Kurdish leaders reported three million Kurds had fled into the 8,000-foot mountains. World views and public concerns for the Kurdish people's plight forced democratic nations to construct a military coalition to provide humanitarian aid to ease the suffering of the Kurds. The code name for this humanitarian operation was Operation Provide Comfort (OPC).

On 2 April 1991, the Washington Post reported that the Kurdish uprising against Saddam Hussein's regime had collapsed. Two days later, Izzat Ibrahim Al-Duri deputy commander of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council, had stated that "the homeland, and from the far north to the far south had been purged of the [rebels]." That same day Robert Hall, Pentagon Deputy Spokesman reported that "there is minimal offensive activity by the insurgents throughout the country." He further stated movement activity had been high. Moreover, he concluded that the government retribution against the movement had been violent and had caused wide-spread displacement of populations.

Turkish administrations estimated over 220, 000 Iraqi Kurdish refugees, fearing brutal reprisals, had crossed the border into Turkey. The refugees included not only the Peshmerga forces and their families, but also professionals, businessmen, and other members of the middle and upper classes, those who had openly supported the uprising. Western journalists, who had been with the Kurds while covering the story for the past weeks, reported that the Kurds were convinced they had been betrayed by the United States. Almost overnight, the Kurds had stopped praising President Bush and begun to accuse him of collusion with Saddam Hussein in acts of "genocide."

Pressure on the administration to do something at that point started to come from all directions. Democratic Senate Majority Leader George J. Mitchell felt that the United States should at least stop Iraqis from using helicopters and gunships to kill Iraqi rebels. Turkish President Turgut Ozal called for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council to deal with the growing refugee crisis on the Turkish-Iraqi border. Furthermore, France via the United Nations sponsored a Security Council Resolution condemning all forms of oppression in Iraq and demanded that the Iraqi administration halt their military campaigns against the rebels in Kurdistan and Southern Iraq. British Prime Minister John Major sent an urgent message to

President Bush and called for a "massive international effort" to help feed and house the refugees who had fled from the Iraqi forces (Cowan, 1995; Gözen, 1995; Schiesl, 2003).

Goff (1992), Goff (1992b) and Holt (1999) sheds light on that on 5 April 1991, President Bush ordered the United States military to begin airlifting medical and food supplies to the Kurdish refugees trapped in the mountains along the Turkey-Iraq borders. The United States military cargo aircraft flying from Europe and escorted by jet fighters began dropping food, blankets, tents, and medical supplies to the Kurds along the 206-mile border area on 7 April 1991. On 16 April 1991, at a press conference, President Bush in speaking of Operation Provide Comfort stated: "I want to underscore that all we are doing is motivated through humanitarian concerns. We intend to turn over the administration and security of these sites to the United Nations as soon as possible. The prohibition against the Iraqi fixed or rotary wing aircraft flying north of the thirty-sixth parallel hence remains in effect." He thus designated humanitarian objectives for the mission, supported with military forces. During April and May 1991, there were over 40,000 soldiers, sailors, marine, and air force deployed from thirteen nations to support OPC. Besides, water, food, medical care, shelter and clothing, these coalition forces provided the Kurds with a safe area in Northern Iraq that allowed them to return to their homes in peace. In return, the military coalition handed the humanitarian mission over to the United Nations and civilian relief organizations.

Moreover, the U.S. secrtary of state (James Addison Baker III- James Baker 25 January 1989- 23 Agust 1992), on the provide comfort shed lights on that, " My experience on that rugged hillside was not the only catalyst for huge expansion for the American and international reliefe to the Kurds that came to be known as Operation Provide Comfort, it similarly galvanised me into pressing for a new policy, announced by the presidenr on April 16th, of establishing safe havens for the Kurds in northern Iraq- refugee camps secured by US forces and administrated by the United Nations under the command of the then Lt Gen Shalikashvili, the deputy commander of US army forces in Europe" (Holt, 1999:216).

Schiesl (2003) presents that on 4 September 1991, then commander of PPC Lieutenant General Shalikashvili laid out his mission, objectives and tasks before the House of the Representatives Committee On Armed Forces, as follows: "The mission that we had was very simple. . . to provide immediate relief to the refugees in the mountains and then, as rapid as prudent, to turn over the operation to international relief agencies and private voluntary

organization. . . The objectives that we set ourselves are not astonishing, I say with confidence. Immediate: stop the dying and suffering; stabilize the population. Mid-term: resettle population at temporary sites; establish sustainable, secure environment. Long-term: return population to their homes.

The principle of Unity of Command as Applied in War (all forces operating under a single command with the authority to direct those forces in backing up common goals) was the valid principle. But it was applied in a considerably different way in peace-making operations such as Provide Comfort. The multinational and interagency mix of forces prevented General Shalikashvili from achieving Unity of Command and brought about the principle of Armaments of Unity of Effort as paramount. That is, Unity of Effort [coordination through cooperation and common interests] was an essential element in the absence of Unity of Command throughout Operation Provide Comfort I and II.

Cowan (1995) goes on to say General Shalikashvili's organizing principle was to give his crucial subordinates the disparate service and national elements for any given function, then to hold them responsible for pulling together that function. Each national contingent came with its own commander and established liaison with General Shalikashvili's staff in Incirlik and in turn with his subordinates. General Shalikashvili mentioned to each national commander that he expected him to exercise "tactical control" (TACON, a well-understood NATO term) over all forces in theater. TACTON fulfilled two main goals: 1) It enabled the CTF commander to execute the mission with no loss of effectiveness and 2) it provided individual coalition partners ultimate authoritative control over their own forces. Legalistic prescriptions and interpretations of command relationship did not come into focus; mission accomplished was the overriding concern. The mixed national and service forces operated much like a single service force rather than a coalition of four services and thirteen coalition nations.

Obviously, the first thing the coalition had to do was stop the dying and the suffering in the various camp sites. Clearly, the stabilizing of that fleeing population was the first priority, and an attempt to turn things around was needed. However, the coalition also realized that due to the nature of the extraordinarily rugged terrain and the fact that it was very difficult to get water, shelter and medical aid to those seeking refuge, they really needed to remove those people to some place where they could get that help to them. The only territory available where they could be moved to were nearby valleys that if having road networks would support such a massive

relief operation. The available territory was in Northern Iraq; it was a territory also known as Kurdistan (Land of the Kurds). “We knew that we had to establish the needed security in that part of Northern Iraq and then erect temporary camp sites for relocating these refugees.”

According to Schiesl (2003), more recently USCENTOM Commander General Tommy Franks was reported to have said: “I will tell you as long as we are involved in Operation Northern Watch (ONW) and Operation Southern Watch, that being the patrolling of the no-fly zones in Iraq, we will continue to place our young men and women in uniform at risk. On the other hand, should we not be involved in containing Saddam Hussein and his ambitions, there is a potential for proliferation and building of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in that region, as well as the rebuilding of the conventional weapons of his forces, and in addition the potential of proliferation of terrorist threats from Iraq”.

From day one of the Operation, OPC commanders and other military leaders made statements regarding the mission and the overall situation in Iraq’s Kurdistan. Their statements focused primarily on humanitarian objectives in the course of the Operation as recommended by General Shalikashvili, and as directed by General Franks were reviewed in regard to containing the spread of Communism and the Cold War—a procedure known as “containment.”

In October 1991, the International Defence Review stated that high-level United States policy-makers admitted that televised images of the plight of Kurdish refugees, combined with footage of Bush and John Major washing their hands of the Kurdish Revolt, were instrumental in forcing United States leaders to change course and intervene militarily in northern Iraq. . . The accusation that leaders in the West were again leaving the Kurds to their fate at the hands of the ‘Butcher of Baghdad’ was particularly emotive to public opinion. It was an accusation that few politicians facing re-election such as George Bush and John Major could ignore, even if professional military advice from the likes of generals such as Colin Powel and Peter de la Billiere was to withdraw the troops.

According to Schiesl (2003), “The U.S objective had been to guarantee order and to provide safety from the Iraqi forces so that the Kurdish refugees would leave their mountainous retreats and return home. Thus, in keeping with the military and also the humanitarian purposes for the intervention.”

The United Nations Resolution

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 688 has been cited as the justification for the United States and its ally's intervention in Kurdistan in the northern part of the country. This statement, nevertheless, might not be valid. According to many, no United Nations resolution had ever sanctioned Provide Comfort or the establishment of a No-Fly Zone (NFZ). However, many prior and subsequent resolutions have been used as either background or reinforcing arguments for this intervention. Whether or not OPC was currently considered a United Nations sanctioned mission, the present research indicates that at the time OPC I was being conducted the operation was neither entirely outside the realm of the United Nations nor was it unconnected to the tenets of UNSCR 688. The mission conducted the day after the Resolution was passed and the military mission was clearly in line with an effort to bring relief to the Kurds in the Kurdish territory within Iraqi borders.

According to Goff (1992; Pelletiere (1991) and Schiesl (2003), the tenets of UNSCR 88 called for Iraq to end repression of civilian populace and to permit humanitarian organizations to assist those in need. President Bush stated just days after the mission commenced that 'consistent with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 688 and working closely with the United Nations and other international relief organizations and our European partners, I have directed the United States military to begin immediately to form several encampments in northern Iraq where relief supplies for those refugees will be made available in large quantities and be distributed in an orderly manner.' Whether the United Nations sanctioned the mission or did not sanction the mission, the tenets of the UNSCR were in actuality accomplished due to President Bush's ordering the implementation of Operation Provide Comfort. Even if the operation had not been formally sanctioned through the United Nations, the Resolution and associated United Nations speeches and officials' reports help in analysing the possible reasons why military action was initiated and the United States' reasoning for its continuation for over a decade.

The Operation to End up the Kurdish Refugees in the Mountains

Operation Desert Storm (17 January-23 February 1991) accomplished the main objective of the Gulf War as conceived by the United States and its 42-country coalition. As the combat phase of the Gulf War, it was a military conflict between Iraq and the coalition led by the United States to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi invasion and annexation.

According to Goff (1992b) and Malanczuk (1991), Soon after the Desert Storm victory, based on misreading United States intentions, the Kurds in Iraq took the initiative and started to eliminate Iraqi control over Kurdistan. The United States president's press statement at the time incentivized this wish of both the Kurds in the North and the Shiite Muslims in Southern Iraq. In fact, the Kurds interpreted the press statement to mean that there would be military muscle on the part of the United States to aid the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Furthermore, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) secret radio station in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, broadcast the encouragement that the United States would support a Kurdish overthrow of Saddam Hussein. On 6 March 1991, Masoud Barzani, head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), committed Kurdish Peshmerga forces against the Iraqis. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) also committed Peshmerga forces against the Iraqi forces. They attacked Iraqi forces and defeated scattered garrisons throughout Kurdistan. On 14th March 1991, Jalal Talabani, the PUK leader, declared that Kurdish groups controlled Dohuk governate and parts of the governates of Erbil, Mosul, and Suleimaniyah. President Bush warned the Iraqi government not to use tack helicopters against the movement forces because this would complicate efforts for the permanent cease-fire negotiated after Desert Storm.

And according to Cockayne and Malone (2006); Goff (1992); and Goff (1992b), Saddam Hussein's speech of 16 March 1991 stated that Iraqi armed forces would crush Kurdish forces with the use of attack helicopters, airplanes and chemical weapons. The United States government response came ten days later, during a white House press conference on 26 March 1991, when Bush administration officials strongly reaffirmed the U.S neutrality in the battles raging in Iraq. The U.S military forces would not be used to protect civilian and armed forces groups seeking to topple the government of Saddam Hussein. 'We do not intend to involve ourselves in the internal conflict in Iraq,' said Marlin Fitzwater, the president's spokesman. This message implied that the United States had no intention to intervene in the struggle. Saddam Hussein, on this understanding, conducted his operations against the Kurdish Peshmergas and civilians. A State Department representative on 29 March 1991 stated that the central government in Baghdad had undertaken a major attack against Kurdish held regions, and that re-organized Iraqi Republic Guard units had moved into Kurdistan to attack the Kurdish towns and villages.

The PUK leader, Talabani appealed to President Bush and the United Nations to halt the Iraqi armed forces' genocide of the Kurdish people. On 1 April 1991, Masoud Barzani, the PDK

leader stated that three million Kurds had fled to the northern mountains with little food and inadequate shelter. Barzani requested from the United States, the United Kingdom (UK), and France to send humanitarian aid to these people. He also requested that these three countries further stop the genocide against the Kurds. He showed that 1,000-1,500 Kurds were dying each day from disease, cold and hunger in the mountain camps. On this day, Radio Baghdad broadcast that they had recaptured the cities of Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, and Zakho. On 2 April, Turkey and France appealed to the United Nations Security Council to condemn Saddam Hussein for the oppression of the Kurds in Iraq.

The below summarizes (Canfield et al. 1992; Goff 1992b; Malanczuk 1991; and Pelletiere) 1991 The senior echelon of Iraq declared that on 5 April that they had crushed the Kurdish movement and regained control of Northern Iraq. The same day, President Bush ordered the United States forces to begin airlifting medicines and food. The first airdrop was food stuffs on 7 April 1991. The United States would provide Ten Million Dollars of humanitarian aid. On 8 April 1991, European leaders agreed to provide One-Hundred-Eighty Million Dollars of economic assistance to the Kurds. The United Kingdom Prime Minister John Major proposed that Kurdish safe haven areas should be secured throughout Kurdistan using United Nations forces. He was convinced that the West should be prepared to support a United Nations presence as long as would be necessary to aid the Kurds who were trapped in the Mountains or had fled to Turkey and Iran.

The U.S. Defense Department Secretary (Richard Bruce Cheney- Dick Cheney 21 March 1989- 20 January 1993) supported the formation of a safe haven for Kurds in Kurdistan as proposed by John Major. The Iraqi government expressed fierce opposition to Major's proposal, and on 10 April 1991, the Bush administration backed away from the proposal to make all of Iraqi Kurdistan into a safe haven that would protect the fleeing refugees. Administrative officials told the Iraqi government to avoid military air operations north of the thirty-sixth parallel. On 12 April 1991, President Bush agreed with the European Heads of State upon a six-points coalition humanitarian program for the Kurds: 1) assist the survival of the Kurdish displaced civilians; 2) provide protection and shelter to the Kurds; 3) establish a "safe haven" in Kurdistan; 4) assimilate the Kurds back into their home areas; 5) transfer relief operations to civilian agencies; 6) withdraw coalition military forces. These 12 April 1991 proposals received much support with many states declaring that along with the United States and the United Nations they would

participate in relief operations for the Kurds in Iraq in support of the Six-Point Program. President Bush proceeded to approve the establishment of a safe haven zone in Iraq where Kurdish refugees would be protected. He also ordered a massive helicopter airlift to speed up the humanitarian relief efforts. Helicopters from the United States, Turkey, Germany, and the UK were deployed to Turkey to support the effort.

Lionel A. Rosenblatt, President of Refugees International, stated that we the world faced a massive challenge in the history of refugee relief. However, there were no comprehensive figures on deaths. Relief officials estimated that 1,000 people were dying daily, and that they expected the daily death rate to double or triple if the needed humanitarian assistance were not provided.

The following is according to Cowan (1995); Goff (1992); Hiltermann (1997); and Malanczuk (1991) The United States administration worked hard to motivate multinational participation in the coalition. The first multinational participation forces began to arrive on 13-14 April 1991 and the last on 1 May 1991. The participation in the humanitarian relief operations by other nations formed a Combined Task Force-Provide Comfort (CTF-PC). The formation of the CTF-PC happened on 16 April 1991, with the arrival of multinational forces. With the development of the CTF-PC organizational structure and therefore the command and control, C2 gradually developed. United States Lieutenant General John M. Shalikashvili, Deputy Commander of the United States Army, was appointed to be Commander of the CTF-PC.

The US European command (USEUCOM) issued the operation order to CTF-PC on 16 April 1991 that supported the European Leaders' Six-Point Coalition Humanitarian Program. The operation order included ten military missions to be executed: 1) identify site locations for temporary shelter out of the mountains; 2) Erect temporary living facilities; 3) relocate Iraqi Kurds displaced civilians to locations support by them; 4) prepare to receive the UK, French and Turkish forces; 5) establish a security zone inside Northern Iraq; 6) prepare to reinforce multinational security forces in Iraq; 7) prepare to operate unilaterally, maintain, and secure facilities; 8) provide airbourne combat air patrol (CAP) as necessary; 9) identify additional forces as required; 10) transfer administration and support functions to civilian organizations.

USEUCOM staff conveyed to Shalikashvili that the operation would be conducted in three phases. Phase one would be air and ground delivery of relief supplies facilitated through Special Forces teams and establishing a CAP beginning on 6 April. Phase two would include integrating multinational forces, forming a safe haven in Kurdistan, stabilizing and reconstructing an

infrastructure as required, facilitating the movement of displaced people to new camps, creating a transition to multinational civilian organization control, and returning displaced people to their original homes. Phase three would remove United States and other multinational forces from Iraq and Turkey. This three-phased operation was to be completed by July 1991 when the last coalition soldiers would depart from Northern Iraq. Later on, the three phase concepts especially phase two would cause operation difficulties and prolong the operation.

On 17 April 1991, Shalikashvili was deployed to Turkey, accompanied by Major General Jay M. Garner, Deputy Commander V group. On 18 April, with the operation developing at breakneck speed, the Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-B) was formed with MG Garner designated as commander. CTF-PC now had two subordinate JTF's, the Joint Task Forces Alpha (JTF-A) commanded by Brigadier General Potter and JTF-B commanded by Major General Garner.

Goff (1992) and Schiesl (2003) clearing up that the CTF concept was as follows: JTF-A: 1) provide immediate relief; 2) establish infrastructure in the camps; 3) transfer refugees to transfer camps in JTF-B' area of operations in northern Iraq. Whereas JTF-B: 1) build transit camps; 2) receive and care for refugees; 3) secure the area; 4) return refugees to their homes; 4) turn relief operations over to civilian organizations; 6) withdraw from Iraq. Up to this point operations had been contemplated almost exclusively on humanitarian efforts. As the nature of the operation changed and expanded with the planned entry into Northern Iraq, the security situation facing the coalition forces became critical.

Zakho City as Coalition Headquarters in Northern Iraq

On 19 April, Shalikashvili, met with Iraqi Major General Savan (Deputy DCSOPS of the Iraqi Army) at the Customs House inside Iraq at the Turkish-Iraqi border, to issue a demarche informing the Iraqi government of the coalitions to enter Iraq. Shalikashvili's message was that coalition forces were going to enter Iraq for the purpose of providing humanitarian aid to the refugees. He further informed Major General Savan that the coalition expected no interference from the Iraqis and that coalition forces would not harm them but would be prepared to defend themselves. The demarche also demanded that Iraqi forces withdraw 30 kilometres from Zakho, Iraq which was to be the location for headquarters Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B). Major General Savan acknowledged receiving the demarche but that is all, leaving the coalition to speculate upon what the Iraqi response would be.

Brown (1995); Goff (1992); Goff (1992b) describe events as follows the messaging was decisive. The coalition would enter Iraq with or without Iraqi concurrence. Indeed, the meeting was not intended to secure Iraqi concurrence, but rather one of informing them of coalition intentions. Shalikashvili was unsure what the Iraqi government reaction might be. He stated: "When I first entered into discussion with the Iraqi government, I had no idea what their reaction would be to our insistence that we move coalition forces into Zakho and into the valley. . .

"But when we neared Zakho, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz declared that the allied deployment into Iraq 'has nothing to do with humanitarian assistance. . . We reject [this intervention] into our internal affairs and we condemn it. . . the United States and their allies do not have the right to intervene or send troops.' So much for coalition concerns about potential Iraqi reactions; JTF-B entered Kurdistan to perform its mission.

Brown (1995); Goff (1992); Rudd (2004) continue, the JTF-B's mission was to proceed into Iraq to establish security zones to expedite the safe transfer of refugees from their mountain camps to their homes. Additional, JTF-B was to neutralize the Iraqi army in Kurdistan and relocated 500,000 Kurdish refugees back to their homes. Although, the mission was mainly to be a humanitarian one, Major General Garner viewed his primary mission in Kurdistan to be one of security. To accomplish these complex tasks, he had an ad hoc staff to assist him.

On 20 April 1991, Major General Garner and his forces traveled by vehicle to the semi-governate of Zakho. The second day of the operation saw the repair of the bridge and the link up to the twenty-four MEU armored assets. The Iraqi force units moved out the 44th Division compound. They had all but moved from the high ground overlooking Zakho. The construction of the tent city kept on. The first meeting of the military coordination Center (MCC) took place between Major General Garner and the Iraqi representative, Brigadier General Nashwan. The United States forces would discover that Nashwan was the deputy intelligence officer of the Iraqi General Staff and related to Saddam Hussein. The Meeting was a stand-up meeting in the parking lot of the 44th Division headquarters. Major General Garner informed Brigadier General Nashwan of the locations of Iraqi military units situated within the thirty-Kilometre zone around Zakho. He provided Nashwan with a 1:50, 00 map of the 30 kilometer security zone and locations of Iraqi units within the security zones. Nashwan moved on rapidly in his white Mercedes to track down his units and inform Baghdad of the outcomes of the first MCC meeting. Later on, Garner's forces read the vehicle serial number of Brigadier General Nashwan's car and discovered that it

had been stolen from a Kuwait City Mercedes dealer. Anyway, twenty-four major generals formed a water processing plant in the semi-governorate of Zakho on the Zap River and passed out pure water to the few residents who chose not to flee into the Mountain.

On 21-22 April, the Iraqis had infiltrated 300 secret police into the security zone. The clandestine police had taken over Zakho and were pressuring the townspeople not to approve assistance from the JTF-B. The first sign that something was wrong was that no Kurds went to the 24 MG water point to get fresh water. The clandestine police had gone door to door during the night and threaten the Kurdish villagers not contact JFT-B personnel or take any humanitarian help. The threat was backed up through forces or death. The clandestine police had searched all homes and looted what items they wanted. The small Kurdish population still living in Zakho started to leave. The Kurds in the mountains would not return since the Iraqi secret police were in the town. Their experiences with the Iraqi government and secret police caused an intense fear that could not be overcome through JFT-B good intentions. JFT-B preferred to resettle the displaced Kurds in their houses in Zakho and not establish larger tent cities. For every Kurd who the coalition forces could resettle back into his or her home, there was one less that would have to live in a tent.

And, Brown (1995); Goff (1992b); and Hiltermann (19970) conclude the secret police operating in Zakho were a violation of the demarche that Lieutenant General Shalikashvili had given Iraqi Major General Sabar upon the 19th of April 1991. This was the first Iraqi test of the United States resolve in forming the security zone. Many more Iraqi incidents would occur during the OPC. All of the Iraqi secret police and forces units were to deploy out of the 30 KM security zone. JTF-B proceeded to clear the secret police from Zakho. The first coalition unit to arrive was the British 45 Royal Marine Commando Battalion (45CDO), a part of the 3 CDO Brigade. This battalion had just completed a tour of duty in Northern Ireland. They were well trained in operating in urban areas. The second coalition unit to arrive was that 1st Assault Combat Group (1ACG). This was a Dutch Royal Marine infantry battalion that was part of the British 3 CDO BDE. Both units arrived on 22-24 April 1991 and positioned in Silopi in Turkey.

Goff (1992) and Rudd (2004) give a picture of that twenty-four major generals were given use of tactical control (TACON) of forty-five CDO and ACG along with its organic 2nd Battalion 8th Marine Battalion Landing team (BLT). The mission given to twenty-four MEU was to find, detain and deport the 300 secret police in Zakho. During phase one of the OPORD (25

April 1991, forty-five CDO had the mission to conduct reconnaissance and determine the locations of clandestine police. During Phase Two (26 April 1991), forty-five CDO would conduct a house-to-house search and detain all clandestine police. The first ACG would form checkpoints/ roads blocks on all roads into Zakho. The BLT would control the high ground overlooking Zakho and would have provided light armored vehicles (LAVS) to conduct mobile patrols within the city. Phase Three was the deportation of the secret police and installation of JTF-B approved police.

The execution of the mission went flawlessly. The coalition comprising of United States, British and Dutch Marines succeeded, and all clandestine police were apprehended and deported out of the security areas. Joint Task Force Beta (JTF-B) then selected and licensed fifty regular Iraqi police officers for duty in Zakho. Kurdish people started to return to Zakho. Frequent Kurdish incidents happened within the security zone. However, 500,000 Kurds in the mountains could not all return to Zakho. Plans were drawn up for the security zone to increase and incorporate other Kurdish towns and villages to help in the resettlement.

Brown (1995) and Goff (1992) illustrate that when talking to Kurdish leaders, MG Garner learned that the town of Dohuk had been home for 300,000 to 400,000 Kurds before Desert Storm. Dohuk was twenty-eight kilometres southeast of Zakho and just inside the Zakho thirty kilometer security zone. Twenty-four MEU had Navy Seal and Marine reconnaissance teams on the mountains overlooking Duhok. They reported that the Iraqi force units were evacuating and that Iraqi soldiers were looting the town and blowing up houses. Hence, Major General Garner thought that Dohuk would be crucial for the resettlement of the bulk of the Kurds in the mountains. The coalition developed an OPORD for the occupation of Dohuk. This would permit the coalition to secure Dohuk and persuade the people to return to their homes. The Kurds were in great fear of the Iraqis. They would not go back into Iraqi controlled areas unless coalition forces removed the Iraqi forces and secret police. The plan was never executed for fear of Iraqi government reactions since Dohuk was an Iraqi province capital. Worthy-of-note, the coalition administrations were in Kurdistan for humanitarian reasons, not to invade Iraqi cities or terrain.

Goff (1992) and Holt, (1999), concludes wince JTF-B was not permitted to enter Dohuk, the coalition turned their efforts to the East. The procedures used in forming the 30 kilometer security zone around Zakho were then repeated to extend the zone to Batifa, followed by Sirsenk, then Amediyah and finally Suri. The last being the farthest to the east, 120 KM from Zakho.

These operations were carried out through helicopters. These operations were carried out by helicopter. With the purpose of providing further surveillance to the south duty force Bravo covertly deployed the SEAL units to concealed observation posts south Dohuk, in territory occupied through Iraqi military forces. Batifa (Netherlands marines) was secured on 27 April, Sirsenl (3-325 ACT) on 2 May, Amediyah (45 commando) on 3 May. The French marines, with an Italian SF platoon under command, occupied Suri on 8 May. This expansion of the coalition security zone required the integration of all coalition partners into a cohesive defensive sector. More of the coalition and United States forces arrived daily. At the high point, JTF-B had over 17,000 coalition forces, sailors, marines and airmen from nine nations deployed in Northern Iraq. The nations would arrive as fast as their governments could provide transportation. All the forces staged out of Silopi Turkey before arriving in Kurdistan.

Kurdish Villages and Towns

Brown (1995) and Goff (1992) go on to tell how Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B) executed the first part of the humanitarian mission through forming security in an area, then we would move military and civilian resources into the towns and villages to conduct a survey of what was needed to sort things out. After the survey, the JTF-B would task subordinate units to make any necessary repairs. Some of repairs involved a major effort on the part of the JTF-B subordinate units. The engineers would repair generators to run emergency electricity for water pumps, lighting and basic sanitation systems. They had to repair roads, clear rubble from the streets, and clear the towns of extensive munitions. At one point JTF-B had over fifteen explosive ordnance teams (EOD) consisting of over fifty personnel to clear Kurdish and coalition areas. This exceeded the coalition's wildest expectations. Both the Iraqi forces and Kurdish freedom forces had let remain all sorts of munitions. Houses were booby trapped, mines, grenades, artillery and mortar shells were everywhere. EOD personnel conducted a controlled detonation of over five tons of ordnance every day at 1200 hours. The engineers were also responsible for building the necessary items for the tent cities. Ninety percent of the engineer work effort went to supporting the humanitarian mission. The remaining ten per cent went to supporting the coalition. A navy SEBEE platoon and Army engineer platoon fixed fourteen bomb craters in the Sarsink airfield. This was the only coalition c-130 capable airfield in north-eastern Kurdistan.

Medical units re-established health clinics and restocked the supplies in over ten medical facilities. Since most of the doctors had fled, JTF-B had to man the clinics with military doctors or arrange for private volunteer organization to staff the clinics. Sanitation checks and veterinarian services were also provided. In one medical hospital, two Iraqi doctors stayed but did not receive their salaries from the Baghdad government. JTF-B arranged for civilian organizations to pay the salaries of the two doctors to keep them on at the facility. JTF-B also coordinated through Brigadier General Nashwan for the Iraqi government to pay the doctors, back pay and current salary. This was accomplished through pointing out to Nashwan that his government's stated policy was to care for the Kurds. The Iraqis were quite sensitive to the fact that the world had turned out to help the Kurds since Iraq was not going to help them.

According to Goff (1992b), the JTF-B medical units gave over 50,000 measles shots to the Kurdish children living in the security zone. Coalition units provided six full staffed surgical hospitals to aid the Kurds and coalition forces. It became "common knowledge" that medical coverage provided through the coalition to the Kurds was the best anywhere in the world. There was so many medical units and hospitals that ran out of places for their employment. Every coalition government wanted their hospital to support the Kurds no matter how many medical facilities were already in Kurdistan. One serious matter was that there were not enough ground ambulances for the mission. Only two MEDEVAC helicopters were available. Hence many MEDEVAC missions were flown by standard helicopters.

According to Goff (1992); Goff (1992b), Major John Cooley utilized a Kurdish trucking company to help in transporting humanitarian supplies. He started with two trucks. After the word got out that JTF-B was hiring trucks for $515.00 a day, a bottle of water and MRE for the driver also diesel fuel to complete the mission, he had over 200 trucks showing up each morning for work. At the trucking office, JTF-B had a terrible traffic problem, and the military police were charged with sorting it out. JTF-B established two daily convoys throughout the security zone to five major distribution points delivering water, food, fuel, building supplies and other commodities.

Civil affairs units did surveys to gather all types of information about the Kurdish standard of living. Before OPC, the Iraqi government had preselected grocery stores for Kurdish citizens to shop at for food and other essentials. The system had broken down from since the Kurdish uprising. CIA personnel discovered, through Kurdish citizens that Kurds could only shop at the

grocery store assigned to them. The Iraqi government managers had a customer list of Kurds who could shop at any particular store. The Iraqi government did this to distribute the required food stuffs throughout the Kurdish region since they did not have a free market economy. When the Kurds returned to their towns, JTF-B tapped into this system and was able to decide how much bulk food was required to support the people. That helped greatly in transportation and getting the right amount of food to the right place.

Goff (1992b), continues civil affairs personnel ran three tent cities: the utilities and sanitation department, water department, fire department, police department and food distribution workers. They thus organized all the infrastructure for a city of 20,000 inhabitants. The establishment of the tent city was a huge task. JTF-B planned on housing 200,000 Kurdish refugees in tent cities. The coalition surveyed the Zakho valley floor and laid out ten 20,000 camp sites. The valley floor was planted with wheat before the Kurdish uprising—Kurdistan producing the countries only wheat crops. Later in the Operation, the harvesting of this wheat crop became a JTF-B humanitarian mission. The lay out of the camps, construction of roads, installation and limited dental facilities, safety, law enforcement, and turning them over to the United Nations was top priority to stop the dying of the Kurds in the snow covered mountains.

Goff (1992) concludes the sources required to support the planned ten cities was massive. The personnel needed to staff the tent cities would require a civil department personnel (DART), United Nations Personnel and resources, private volunteer organizations and non-governmental organizations (PVO/NGO). During the operations, the reserve 354th civil affairs brigade with three reserve CA battalion and one duty CA battalion worked at the resettlement of the Kurds. The CA units operated the camps even after the camps were turned over to the United Nations. The UN did not provide the personnel to adequately man the tent cities. The UN flag flew over the tent cities. However, coalition forces provided all services. The UN did quickly get into providing food through care and transported the food from ports in Turkey. They took control of the food warehouse around 15 May. The UN personnel had liaison with JTF-B but did not want the Iraqis to view them as members of the coalition. They kept their distance to assure the Iraqi government that they were neutral, providing only advice to the JTF-B commander and staff.

Dohuk Humanitarian Operation

Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B) had two major missions in meeting the humanitarian requirements. The first was to spur the Kurds to return to their homes and villages. The second was to provide temporary food and shelter in the tent cities. JTF-B had coordinated with the Joint Task Forces Alpha (JTF-A) and arranged for both organizations to use all available transportation assets to move the Kurds down from the mountains. Moving the 452,000 Kurds from mountain camps was not an easy feat. JTF-A and JTF-B contracted for both Turkish and Kurdish trucks to go to the base of the mountains to pick up people and transport them to either their homes into their villages or into the tent cities. The people were not forced to leave the mountains; they eagerly wanted to go home. Convoy routes and way stations were developed and manned through JTF-A and JTF-B personnel. It took over to get all of the Kurds off the mountains.

Goff (1992) and Goff (1992b) clearly demonstrate that an arrangement was reached with the Iraqi government in late May 1991 that would permit eighty-one military personnel to enter Dohuk and re-establish, along with Iraqi officials, the basic health services in the city. JTF-B forces only permitted and civilian personnel were only permitted to stay for twenty-one one in this effort. This permitted more Kurds to return to their homes in Dohuk and greatly reduced the number of refugees staying in the tent camps around Zakho. This action of putting Dohuk back into service virtually cleared the tent cities zone, were afraid to return to the villages.

The Military, Political, and Humanitarian Objectives of Operation Provide Comfort

1. Military Objectives

The initial objective, the military objective as deduced by the European Command and the Combined Task Forces Provide Comfort staff from the President of the United States' policy of assistance to the Kurdish refugees, was to stop the dying and suffering. International relief agencies' officials estimated up to 1000 people were dying daily. Because of the extremely rugged terrain and poor road conditions, the first logical option to deliver humanitarian aid was by air. On 17 April, the U.S force c-130 delivered twenty-seven tons of badly needed food and supplies. During the first five days, the c-130s had flown 41 missions and delivered 136 tons of meals ready to eat (MREs, 67,500 litters of bottled water, 35 tons of blankets, and 400 parachutes intended for use as tents). Even though it was the quickest logical means to help in this situation, airdrop had its disadvantages. The quantity of airdropped supplies simply could not alleviate the

dying and suffering of the now estimated 700,000 refugees huddled along the Turkish-Iraqi borders. To make matters worse, the press reported that several refugees had been killed during the airdrop operations. Accordingly, the international community started to discuss alternatives, which would eventually lead President Bush to alter his policy regarding the Kurdish issue.

The Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal was the first to suggest that enclaves along the border should be created for the refugees where they would be protected against attack from Saddam's regime. The British Prime Minister John Major proposed this idea to the European Community and won its support for a UN supervised enclave. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney further increased the issue of safe haven zones but conceded that the United States officials had not considered how such a zone could be achieved. Moreover, the United Nations Security Council began informal consultation on ways to make a buffer zone in the territories of Kurdistan (Gözen, 1995).

While the United Nations debated the creation of what came to be known as "safe havens," the United Kingdom, France, Turkey, and the United States agreed to augment the airdrop effort by means of a massive helicopter airlift. Concurrently, the United States warned the Iraqi government not to carry out any military activity in the Kurdish areas where international efforts were underway to aid Kurds trapped in the mountains. The Iraqis were specifically instructed not to fly any aircraft north of the 36th parallel, which encompassed most of the territory of the traditional Kurdish homelands. The administrative officials warned that this was only an endeavor to create a de facto safe haven. On 11 April when President Bush, after meeting with the European community officials, declared that the United States and European allies were now, 'in agreement on the creation of areas within Iraq where refugees would be protected,' a statement that effectively changed his original guidance and policy.

Following consultations with Prime Minster Major of the U.K., President Mitterrand of France, President Ozal of Turkey, Chancellor Kohl of German, this morning I, the U.N. Secretary General Peres De Cuellar am announcing an expanded, a greatly expanded and more ambitious relief effort. The approach is quite simple; if we cannot get adequate food, medicine, clothing, and shelter to the Kurds living in the mountains along the Iraq-Turkish border, we must encourage the Kurds to move to areas in Northern Iraq where the geography facilitates rather than frustrates such a large-scale relief effort.

Consistent with the U.N Secretary Council Resolution 688 and working closely with the United Nations and other international relief organizations and our European partners, I have directed the United States military forces to begin immediately to establish several encampments in Northern Iraq where relief supplies for these refugees will be made available in large quantities and distributed in an orderly way.

Our long-term objective remains the same—for the Iraqi Kurds and, indeed, for all Iraqi refugees, wherever they are, to return home and to live in peace, free from repression, free to live their lives.

We intend to turn over the administration of and security for these sites as soon as possible to the U.N. (Clary, 1994).

President George Bush's original policy had now evolved into a more comprehensive policy. The president had coordinated with Europe leaders and set the wheels in motion for a longer-term solution. While still to stop the dying and suffering, the second prong of a two pronged U.N. backed relief effort was initiated in earnest. The second prong would be an international effort under Combined Task Provide Comfort leadership, to eventually have the Kurds voluntarily return to their homes, to repatriate them. The objective would be to provide 'international humanitarian presence and relief wherever in the country, so that people could stay as close to home, and eventually return.' Having expanded his policy to include the termination criteria of turning the operation over to the United Nations, the stage was now set for the operational military commander to develop his objectives, and to fulfil his plan using his available resources.

Then Lieutenant General John Shalikashvili, who assumed command of this military effort known as Operation Provide Comfort on 17 April, listed his mission, objectives and tasks as follows:

Provide Comfort Mission

The Combined Task Forces Provide Comfort conducts multinational humanitarian operations to provide immediate relief to displaced Iraqi civilian until international relief agencies assume supervision.

Provide Comfort Objectives

Immediate: stop the dying and suffering, stabilize the population. Mid-term: resettle population at temporary sites, establish sustainable, secure environment. Long-term: return population to their homes.

Provide Comfort Tasks

Provide immediate relief/establish population. Build distribution system/ infrastructure. Construct transit centres. Transition displaced civilians to transit centres. Transition the Operation to international relief organizations and private voluntary organizations. Provide continuous security for operations. Facilitate ultimate objective to return displaced civilians to their homes.

According to Clary (1994); Cowan (1995), one of the real keys to the success of Operation Provide Comfort was realized in the translation of national policy into the mission statement, objective, and task listed above. The mission, objectives, and tasks statements were translated by the Combined Task Forces Provide Comfort Staff and based on the 16 April 1991 United States European Command (EUCOM) operation order which listed the Combined Task Forces and concept of operations. Comparing President Bush's statement to the listed objective, it is obvious that the policy speech was translated into an appropriate mission and objectives through both EUCOM staff and also the Combined Task Forces staff. The objectives were clearly stated. Termination criteria was listed as turnover to the United Nations of both administration and security. The objective also clearly provided for a time-phased approach that allowed for propitiation, and yet kept long-term objectives; in essence the plan that would achieve the objectives.

While the United States coalition military intervention in Northern Iraq had clearly met its humanitarian objectives by the fall of 1991, military forces remained in place. The ongoing involvement in the region indicates that although the humanitarian situation had been successfully handed over to non-military agencies and non-governmental organizations, there were still additional objectives for the United States military coalition. That is, the military objectives of United States involvement in the region were not met at the conclusion of OPC 1, and therefore, although a majority of the United States military personnel and equipment redeployed, a considerable presence remained. This study deduces that the overreaching military

objective of the United States coalition armed intervention in Kurdistan was to deter Iraqi military aggression against the established Kurdish safe haven [later, autonomous zone] of Iraqi Kurdistan. This objective could be broken down into two arenas: (1) deter Iraqi ground aggression and (2) deter Iraqi air aggression.

The initial establishment of the NFZ and security zone was to deter Iraqi air and ground forces in order to allow humanitarian assistance efforts to take place, and Shalikashvili rapidly activated Joint Task Force-Bravo. . . Its focus would be to neutralize the Iraqi army in the Northern region of Iraq and implement a plan to reintroduce 500,000 Kurdish refugees back into the country. Once Iraqi forces were neutralised and the humanitarian effort was formed, the ground mission was completed. For this reason and for the purpose of this study, the objective of deterring Iraqi ground aggression ends at the conclusion of OPC1, while the objective of deterring Iraqi air aggression remains for the duration of OPC/ONW.

On conclusion of OPC-1, the ground forces deterrent left the region, while with the enforcement of the NFZ the air deterrent capability remained throughout. In 1991 OPC-1 was clearly a deterrent to Iraqi ground forces; thousands of soldiers ensured this. On transition to OPC II and the exodus of the majority of the ground element, it was obvious that the focus was shifted from deterring both ground and air forces to simply deterring air threats. 'The mandate of Provide Comfort was to administer a no-Fly Zone north of the thirty-six parallel in order to prevent Iraq from using its air power against Kurds.' And that was the mandate the United States coalition forces were enforcing. On transitioning from OPC II to ONW, the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Shalikashvili clarified that the United States coalition military objective in Kurdistan 'Operation Provide Comfort had provided humanitarian aid to the Kurdish refugees and enforcement of the northern no-fly-zone. The new operation Northern Watch would focus exclusively on enforcement of the no-Fly-Zone.'

When the present research reaches a conclusion, it is anticipated that the researchers will argue that Northern Watch, a military mission was all-in-all a success in accomplishing its objective. Although there have been incursions north of the thirty-sixth parallel through both air and ground forces, Saddam's forces have ultimately had very little impact in this region in the time since OPC commenced. Most of the military personnel and equipment redeployed after OPC-1, and what was left of the remaining ground forces was very small in comparison to what had been deployed at the height of the operation. A still significant air presence also remained in

place on the termination of OPC-I. After Desert Strike the remaining ground forces left the region and only air power enforcing the no-fly zone remained. Yet the air presence maintained operations and remained in place up to the commencement of Iraqi freedom. It is therefore a certainty that the personnel and equipment specifically deployed to meet the objective had not redeployed or otherwise been removed from a position of influence relative to the objective.

By the end of OPC-I, government decision makers had determined that it was safe to redeploy a majority of ground forces and hand over the humanitarian mission to non-governmental organizations without military ground forces for protection. This action indicates that, in the eyes of the United States government, the Iraqi ground threat against the region had been greatly deterred and initial success in realizing this objective was clear. Moreover, statements in 2002 by Deputy Secretary of Defense for policy (Paul Wolfowitz 15 May 1989- 19 January 1993) verify this: 'After the war ended when some million Kurdish refugees were huddled freezing in the mountains on the Turkish border, the Turks were afraid to let them into their country and we did not want to let them starve. President Bush ordered the United States troops to go back into Iraq to create a haven for the Kurds. [USMC General] Jim Jones and his marines faced the Iraqi army and, without firing a shot, were able to move them out of the northern third of their motherland and to create a sanctuary that is still largely to be observed up to this day.' In researching the military objective of deterring the Iraqi air threat, this was evidence that the United States acknowledged that the mission was accomplished many times over. On 10 September 1996, response to a question asking why the military continues to enforce a no-fly zone (NFZ) over the Kurdistan region, a Department of Defense official admitted that 'maintaining the no-fly zone over Northern Iraq does prevent Iraq from using its airpower in a way to take retribution against one Kurdish faction or another.'

The above statements from government officials affirm that the measure of United States government success that they sought by way of military deterrence was fulfilled.

1. The Humanitarian Objectives

The study thus far shows that although there were initial Iraqi efforts to keep ground forces inside the Kurdish safe-haven, this threat was soon mitigated. 'Iraq agreed to withdraw all armed forces and secret police from Dohuk and take up new positions 15 kilometres south of the city. On 20 May 1991, a small convoy of coalition vehicles entered Dohuk and formed a forward

command post. . . The security zone then extended to 160 kilometres east to west and 60 kilometres north to below the Turkish border.'

Although Iraq never accepted the legitimacy of the NFZ and made many public statements denouncing operations in the region, its actions indicate that the United States coalition objective of keeping the ground and air threat from committing acts of aggression against the now Kurdish autonomous zone was achieved. There were no severe Iraqi ground attacks in the autonomous zone during OPC-1—the ground attack into Erbil happened during OPC-II and was retaliated against with Desert Strike. From then on, the Iraqi ground forces remained a non-threat to the region. The fact that the ground incursion at Erbil came long after the change from OPC-II means that it is beyond the scope of this study as initially designated. Iraq attempted no serious air incursion into the autonomous zone from when operations in the region commenced, and during OPC-I it made no serious ground incursion into the autonomous zone. This inaction on the part of the Iraqi regime indicates that it acknowledged the successful accomplishment of the objective of deterring Iraqi military aggression against the establishment of the Kurdish safe-haven.

The present researchers could deduce no decisive evidence to either substantiate or refute the fulfilment of their aims in what measure. To what measure was both confirmed and contradicted by numerous relevant sources and therefore, the result was open to doubt. Although Michael stated that 'the Zone has been effective in deterring Iraqi air attacks,' which contention was corroborated numerous times throughout any research, it was also challenged. 'No-fly operations over Iraq have already lasted over five years, and there is no end in sight. Provide Comfort -II, which began in July 1992, was initially intended to protect the Kurdish population in Northern Iraq. Southern Watch, begun in August 1992, was initially intended to protect the Shiite population of Southern Iraq. However, the No-Fly Zone (NFZ) operations were not very effective in protecting either group.'

The instances where reports contend that the NFZ was ineffective were on the whole vague and in very few cases showed compelling arguments substantiated with comprehensive evidence. Accordingly, regarding the measure of success, although there were reports to the contrary, the present study can only say that no conclusion can be reached.

On the other hand, Schiesl 2003 reaches a definite conclusion regarding OPC I:

Thus, there is no evidence that the Iraqi regime made any significant attempt to conduct acts of aggression against the Kurdish safe-haven during the time frame in which Provide Comfort I was carried out. This leads one to deduce that in this area, the objective was met. The research further indicates that there no evidence that Iraqi made any noteworthy threating air incursion north of the thirty-sixth parallel throughout the period of OPC. This shows that in this arena the measure success striven for had been met. Based on the research done, it is feasible to state that Saddam's military was successfully deterred from armed aggression against the Kurdish population of Northern Iraq in the time period from OPC up to March 2003. However, the simple fact remains that the forces allocated to the enforcement of the NFZ remained in place up to the onset of Iraqi freedom. The United States government had spoken of the mission in general as accomplished; they said that Saddam was deterred from acts of aggression into the autonomous zone. However, the mission continued, which indicates that the military objective was met, but in measure only—not in full.

2. The Political Objectives

The humanitarian concern surrounding the situation in Kurdistan was indubitably the primary reason for the initiation of United States coalition military involvement, yet humanitarian tragedies occur all over the globe and relatively few receive the attention of the United States coalition military. This might lead a viewer to inquire 'why Kurdistan, and not elsewhere?' One argument for military intervention regarding the humanitarian matters of Kurds in Kurdistan of Iraq is that the operation served the political interests of the United States government. The literature review lends veracity to this argument on many fronts. First and foremost, the Safwan Accords created no mention of the Iraqi use of forces against the peoples of its own nation; hence many viewed that the war ended without the coalition, more specifically without the United States forces, satisfactorily quelling the Iraqi forces threat. Secondly, the United States military coalition was still in the region in force and the Turkish government was faced with a refugee problem from an ethnic population it considered to be an adversary. Furthermore, the international press, after dwelling on Desert Shield and Desert Storm for so long, was looking for a story. The story it found showed the repression and suffering of a Kurdish population within the borders of one country that a United States coalition had just defeated in war and another country

that the United States and its allies considered their staunchest ally in the Middle East and the Muslim World. These factors all led to the reasoning that the United States and European governments felt compelled to act for political reasons. It was anticipated that researchers would argue that some of the political objectives of the United States coalition were achieved, and others were not.

Although study has not revealed any instance in which the United States coalition governments specifically showed political objectives surrounding the matter, research shows that the overarching, implicit objectives of OPC came in two phases. Initially, the political objectives of military intervention were to save face in the eyes of the international community that was witnessing the suffering on the news and at the same time to appease the Turkish government that was at the time one of the United States coalition most valuable allies in the Muslim World in the Middle East.

With Turkey's appeasement assured and what would have become a public affairs disaster for the United States coalition if avoided, the political objective of military intervention altered. Having such a military presence in the region permitted the military capability of focus on what might have become the overriding objective for OPC II, the containment of Saddam's regime.

The United Nations inspector had been in Iraq since the end of the Gulf War, negating Saddam's capability to effectively revitalize his chemical munitions arsenal. Now, with OPC in the Kurdish areas and Southern Watch in the South part of the country, the United States coalition had the ability to limit Saddam's ability to take military action against his own population and threaten his neighbours in the Gulf region. 'But the rhetoric surrounding the zones still reiterates the formulas used to justify them since 1991. These formulas hold that no-fly zones protect civilian populations Kurds in the North and Shiites in the South and that they are part of an international policy's of 'containing Iraq' and protecting its neighbours from attacks.' Containment became the political objective for the United States Coalition military in OPC, and it seemed that this mission was for a time being accomplished. However, in the end it failed to be an effective long-term policy for dealing with the Iraqi regime.

In 1996, the State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns declared that "we now have to look to the international relief organizations to provide the sort of aid that Operation Provide Comfort did in the past, the economic, humanitarian help. . . But we will continue to run the military mission, which has been so effective in containing Saddam Hussein." Here the United States administration clearly states that in 1996 the military presence in Kurdistan was effective in containing Saddam Hussein. In1998, President Clinton said that "the no-fly zones have been and will remain an important part of our containment policy. Because we effectively control the skies over much of Iraq. Saddam has been unable to use air power to repress his own people or to lash out again at his neighbors." This affirms that the remaining objective was still effectively being accomplished into the OPC years. Nonetheless, as time passed, it seems as though the government's faith in the policy of containment started to wane. "Saddam Hussein is a 'threat to civilization' who will be strengthened by those get their way in the belief that contained through the international community, rather than removed. Containment failed yesterday in Iraq. Containment fails today. And containment will fail tomorrow." This viewpoint stated by Senator John McCain was to become the United States government's official position; containment had failed and was not the answer.

Furthermore; Schiesl (2003) spells out that, likewise, scholars such as Anthony Cordesman contend that Iraq could only be contained by military forces. "No deal with Iraq is likely to last longer than the West's military presence in the Gulf. . . Diplomacy will at best be extension of forces by other means. As is the case with Iran, the threat from Iraq can ultimately only be contained or countered by a war's fighting capacity." OPC was a part of this 'war's fighting capacity.' It appeared that Saddam's regime had been effectively contained. Research indicates that this was the majority view in 1994, a time when Iraq had neither conducted decisive military operations against the neighboring countries since OPC was formed nor been able to effectively expand its military capability. Again and again, however, as time went on, the containment policy and its effectiveness came into question.

3. Humanitarian Objectives

This study shows that the overarching humanitarian objective of Operation Provide Comfort was to stop the dying and suffering and establish a sustainable, secure environment with

the aim of facilitating the ultimate return of the population to their homes. This assertion is alluded to in a vast majority of studies related to the topic and it could hardly have been disputed that this was the principal basis for the commencement of OPC. On fulfilment of the relief effort initiated by the United States coalition military, masses of Kurds left the hazards of their Mountain sanctuary and were given assistance by the United States military forces.

With the transition to OPC-II, the United States coalition militaries handed over the relief operation to international relief non-governmental organization and turned its efforts to other priorities. The mission of OPC was to aid in the provision of humanitarian help, and it did that for a while. Then that mission was turned over to others. Once it was determined that the humanitarian mission of OPC-I was completed, a vast majority of the troops in the region redeployed, and the relatively few personnel left behind were neither logistically outfitted nor large enough to provide any type of substantive humanitarian aid.

President Bush stated: “In my last report, I described the Iraqi repression of the Kurdish and other internal population groups, which necessitated the introduction of United States and other coalition armed forces into northern Iraqi to provide relief and security for civilian population. As I stated then, this effort was not intended as a permanent solution to the problem nor as a military intervention in the internal affairs of Iraq. Rather, it was intended as a humanitarian measure to save lives. Having succeeded in providing safe conditions for the return of Kurdish refugees from the mountainous border areas, United States forces have now withdrawn from Northern Iraq.”

The other forces remaining in the region were chiefly air forces flying out of Turkey and were in no direct participation with the humanitarian effort. The transition of the humanitarian mission to civil relief organizations and concurrent redeployment of the troops sent specifically to provide humanitarian assistance assured that this measure was suitably fulfilled.

President Bush also stated that ‘in the 68 days since the initiation of Operation Provide Comfort, the United States had delivered through air and land over 17,000 tons of relief supplies and provided medical assistance for thousands of Kurdish refugees and displaced persons who

fled to the Turkey-Iraq border areas. Countless lives were saved. Through the United States leadership, spearheaded so well through military. . . Iraqi Kurdish refugees and displaced persons had left the inhospitable mountains and traveled to or through relief camps we built, most then returning to their homes. The last Mountain camp has closed. The task of responding to this human tragedy was not over, but we could be grateful for what had been accomplished by the United States, the United Nations, and the international community.

Schiesl (2003) presents his viewpoint as follows one might argue that the stated objective was not met by the military forces intervention, for the United States government handed what remained of the humanitarian mission over to non-governmental relief organizations on transition from OPC I to OPC II. This action in itself might be interpreted as evidence that the United States military intervention did not completely accomplish the mission. On the other hand, one might argue that the military did in fact stop the dying and suffering, form a secure environment, and facilitate the ultimate return of the population to their homes in working with outside relief organizations. One example where a government official acknowledges mission success is in remarks prepared by the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Shalikashvili, who commanded the forces in Iraq during OPC-I: "The United States and allied military forces. . . worked closely with United Nations officials and NGOs. With massive air and land resupply operations and a tough deterrent posture, the coalition did indeed stop the dying and the misery and also within a few months returned the Kurdish refugees back home. It took a marriage between military muscle and NGO know-how to do this. That worked very well."

The present researcher(s) concludes that the above remarks by General Shalikashvili, supported by other statements created from government officials and actions taken at the instigation of the United States government—point to the successful fulfilment of this measure.

The Iraqi government reaction to the humanitarian relief was as irrelevant since due to the coalition forces, the Iraqi government and armed forces were distanced from the impact. The aim of Operation Provide Comfort was as stated in the beginning to "stop suffering and dying in the mountain camps, create a secure zone in Northern Iraq, and return the refugees safely from wherever they might be. Provide Comfort achieved these objectives." This affirmation made in

1993 is supported through an observer's more recent assertion that "in 1991, President George W. Bush mobilized the most successful complex humanitarian operation of recent times, Operation Provide Comfort in Iraqi Kurdistan. This Operation saved tens of thousands of innocent Kurds from starvation and disease in the ceasefire of the Gulf War. . . The Operation was explicitly directed to provide a seamless transfer of responsibility to non-governmental organizations once security had stabilized. The mission's success was built on unprecedented communication and coordination between the military and humanitarian groups." The basic conclusion was thus that the humanitarian objectives were indeed met, which is in keeping with the overall conclusion reached in this study by the present researcher(s). That is, the relevant data states that the human suffering was relieved and that the humanitarian objectives were met.

Conclusion

Operation Provide Comfort is the model that should be held to account for future United States coalition missions as well as future coalition efforts in which the United States may be involved. The environment in which Operation Provide Comfort had to perform its mission was a complex one, ranging from forging political agreements to conducting multinational operations at the tactical level. Success in this operation was due to many factors.

The sight of 700,000 Kurdish refugees fleeing before the wrath of Saddam Hussein's army into the rugged mountains, followed by the sight of 1,000 of them dying each day brought world attention to the Kurdish plight in the aftermath if the Gulf War in April 1991. In conjunction with world leaders, President Bush with European leaders established a policy to assist those refugees and return them to their homes. President Bush's policy was implemented through a successful operational military strategy that evolved from a policy. A significant key to the success of the strategy, was that the policy was translated into clear and concise mission statement and mission objectives. These objectives then coalition military, international relief organization, further private voluntary organization resources to successfully execute the mission tasks that flowed from the mission objectives.

The new world order appears to indicate that peace making and peacekeeping might become a prominent part of United States foreign policy in the future. If it does, the strategy

employed during Operation Provide Comfort should be filed in the 'Success' drawer; it should be readily available for future reference.

One of the significant lessons to be learned from this Operation is that the glow from an operation's 'success' is dimmed if its termination criteria is indeterminate.

Research was initiated to determine how the tenets of UNSCR 688 and other Security Council Resolutions related to the military efforts of Operations Provide Comfort and Operation Northern Watch; that is, whether or not those tenets had been or were being fulfilled through this military presence. Once it was determined that the United Nations Security Council had not sanctioned the United States coalition military presence and were not in accord with any United Nations resolution, the direction of the research changed. Instead of determining whether or not the objectives of the military were accomplished, researchers had to determine what the objectives were [in regard to the assertion that they were not associated with any UNSCR resolution]. This proved to be impractical, as the number of feasible objectives were deemed countless. Hence it was necessary to determine what the overarching primary objectives of the presence were and whether or not those had been accomplished. Research determined that the primary objectives of OPC could be broken down into three sub-categories: military, political and humanitarian objectives.

Although it is unlikely that there were military, political and humanitarian goals ongoing throughout the entire decade, the present study shows that in all likelihood these goals were linked or nested together in some form or fashion. The evidence indicates that each sub-category could be identified as having principal aims for each of the three phases of the United States coalition military operations in Iraqi Kurdistan. The first phase, Operation Provide Comfort I, from 6 April 1991 to 24 July 1991, was mainly a humanitarian operation aimed at bringing an end to the suffering of the displaced Kurds of the region, and hence the humanitarian objectives of the operation are where focus should be based. The second operation was mainly a military operation aimed at deterring Saddam's regime from attacking Kurdish population of Iraq. And hence the military objective of this operation should be the focus. The third and final phase of

Operation Provide Comfort focused on the political objective of containment, and therefore is where the focus should be.

Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-B) completed its mission of sustaining the lives of over one million displaced Kurdish people in Northern Iraq in 100 days. During that 100 days, the world poured out its generosity and humanity toward the Kurds. The accomplishments of JTF-B proved that a military coalition is an extremely effective organization in providing humanitarian assistance and security. Their fast action in lifesaving set a model for coalition and civilian relief agencies in future humanitarian operations.

The building of a military coalition requires trust and mutual respect in personal relationships of partners. The political agenda and mission requirements are accommodated within the coalition. Coalition humanitarian operations should include the development of memoranda of understanding between the military and the partners.

The use of tactical control (TACON) as an approach for employing coalition forces stands to be the standard into the 21st century. Coalition nations would maintain control of their own forces deployed on the battlefield. The coalition commander must work with TACON relationships and still accomplish the mission.

Operation Provide Comfort showed that coalition forces can come together rapidly from the strategic to tactical levels, be deployed out of area and conduct operations in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. The Operation demonstrated that there are numerous roles military forces can accomplish, that military forces have the capacity to do much more than shoot down targets. (As Operation Desert Storm evidenced, the United States military does that very well.) However, aside from combat operations military forces can also be peacemakers and peacekeepers. They can provide assistance to those in desperate need.

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