

Friedrich W. Korkisch

**The Political Military Decision-making Process in the USA
- Intervention Policy -**

Theory, Legal and Political Issues, Procedures, Military Considerations

S U M M A R Y

**of the PhD Thesis, submitted to the
Zrinyi Miklos National Defense University
BUDAPEST
September 2006**

a) Name of the Aspirant:

Friedrich Wilhelm Korkisch

b) Title of the *Thesis*:

**The Political Military Decision-making Process in the USA - Intervention Policy -
Theory, Legal and Political Issues, Procedures, Military Considerations**

c) Scientific Problem:***United States and Intervention***

U.S. literature talked about “intervention” already in 1940, when questions about an entry in the ongoing Second World War came up.

Intervention is traditionally the deployment of force against another state, sometimes short of war, but always short of a *declaration of war*. Neither are there anymore *declarations of war*, nor *peace treaties* at the end of such wars, - with the exception of President Bush’s declaration of war against terrorism in September 2001. Hostilities simply begin and somehow do they end, sometimes with consent between the involved parties, like in Vietnam (1973), or in Yugoslavia (Dayton Agreement of 1995), but in the majority of such cases we see no such documents.

U.S. politics in the last years, especially in regard to the Iraq War, the latest in a row of U.S. interventions, made political decision-making and military activities a topic of many books, political and military publications, of TV news, commentaries and newspapers. Authors were discussing the aspects of specific U.S. traditions, ideology, and decision-making, the influence of advisers, disputes between decision makers, legal issues, modern warfare and the character of interventions, respectively of *Expeditionary Warfare*. Interventions were seen as an answer to contain brushfire-wars during the Cold War-era, but this term is now common for all wars, including “clashes of civilizations”, a cluster of new challenges for the U.S. security policy.

In U.S. literature, the terms “intervention”, “war”, and “expeditionary warfare”, are now used in a synonym way. Even the war against terrorism is seen as a “true war”. (See the *Quadrennial Defense Review Report 2006* of February 2006, and the new *National Security Strategy of the United States* of March 2006).

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought geopolitics and related fields back into the academic debate, not only in the United States, but also in Europe, in Russia and China. Some authors in the U.S. argue, “*the end of the Cold War is also over*”, so is unilateralism, and global competition is back: Russia and China are the (old, new) enemies, India is a new player, so is the EU, and maybe Brazil, none can be considered as a true ally or real friend. After “9-11”, America’s security is fading, and insecurity is on the rise. But measures to contain dangers are implemented. No question, that many states (especially in Europe) discovered *national security* and contradict EU’s plans to work for a joint European defense and comprehensive security.

To answer such new developments, NATO and the European Union began to build “rapid deployable and “reaction forces” for interventions. No wonder that – like in the 1950s - issues of the “international order”, of the “cycles of history”, and of *comprehensive security* (including “individual security”) are on the mind of authors and politicians. Questions about “hard power” and “soft power”, about democratization and “failed states” were raised. The role of the United Nations is always questioned, often in a very critical way.

Interventions: The UN and International Law

Interventions include the threat to use force, *Peace Keeping* (UN Charter Chapter VI), *Peace Making/Peace Enforcement* (UN Charter, Chapter VII), military action with partial or full occupation of a state, aerial attacks, or unrestrained ground combat, also the installation of new governments, the implementation of a new constitution, the creation of new states, etc. (like in “real wars” in the past). Such interventions can be unilateral, multilateral, based on UN-SC Resolutions, or on any other decision.

The term “war” simply is not used, because the UN *Charter* does not permit traditional war anymore besides self defense (as specified in the UN Charter in Art. 51, which is *war*, but even there the term is missing), or aggression (Art. 2 and 33). The *Charter* does, strictly interpreted, not permit any intervention either, if such would violate the sovereignty of a state (see Art. 2.). All (legal) use of force is delegated to the UN Security Council (UN-SC). The problem is that the *Charter* was written under different circumstances, ideas and expectations. But, despite of the *Charter* and political and legal rhetoric, many interventions were and are *war* in a legal or in a technical sense, like the war in Korea, the Gulf Wars, the air campaign against Yugoslavia, or the war in Afghanistan, but also civil war in many countries.

Over the last decades the rhetoric had adapted too: The UN-SC Resolution, condemning the attack of North Korea (June 24, 1950), called for a “Police Action” to reestablish the authority of the government of South Korea, but for the United States and South Korea this police action was total war, with extended ground-, air- and sea operations, lasting for three years, and with more than two million people killed. Terms coined in the 1960s to bypass the term war, included “maintaining peace”, “regain stability”, “prevention of atrocities”, “helping to establish order”, “helping a befriended government to fight aggression” etc. The only type of war which is not specifically seen as an intervention is pure aggression. (Such however will not hinder a government to label its aggression as an act of “self-defense” under Art. 51, or simply as “fulfilling” existing agreements or to support an ally.) Strangely, even in UN language, the term *Peace Keeping*, *Peace Enforcement*, and *Peace Making* are rarely used.

Intervention, International Law and Reality

It is common knowledge that already Emer de Vattel (1714-1767) introduced in his *Le droit des gens* (written 1744-1758) the right of states to purge an inhuman or dangerous ruler. But in the following centuries the sovereignty of states – fully resembling the *Westphalia System* which was strengthened by the Vienna Congress and by additional agreements became an imperative for internal rule, international law, and international relations. Today, we see - following this legal tradition - law experts who criticize any kind of intervention if not ordered by the UN. But it is widely accepted that international law has lost its former significance. Many UN-SC resolutions are not enforced, or are not politically enforceable, or not enforceable without a large force, which is usually either absent or fails because of risks, costs, or lack of long-lasting success. Therefore, what we see in many parts of the world is ongoing struggle, which is in many cases *non-war* and *non-peace* at the same time.

Until a few years ago, “intervention” was seen in Europe as a type of military activity, including observation, usually based on a political process within the UN, to maintain or to reestablish peace, was mainly time-restricted (or the time-lines were extended periodically by the UN-SC like in the cases of Cyprus, Cashmere, the UNIFIL, or the Golan Heights), were aimed at limited goals (separation of forces, ending civil war, observing cease-fire, supporting humanitarian aid), and were carried out by a small, multinational constabulary-type force. Interventions were mainly *Peace Keeping* (the parties agreed to a UN intervention), or occasionally *Peace Making* or *Peace Enforcement* missions (one, or both parties would not accept any interference). Because UN-SC language tries to avoid such terms, interventions were (and still are) called “missions”. True, many did not see any fighting at all, or only sporadic clashes, some were war-like, like the Congo Mission in 1960 and in the years afterwards. Approximately 120 missions of this kind were carried out since 1947.

Additionally, a number of humanitarian missions were accomplished: The first one was organized by UNRRA, supporting the Palestine refugees in 1948 and later on until today, but officially, the first UN-SC decision about such a mission was the Earthquake Relief Operation in Skopje 1963, the first under military protection, was Somalia from 1992 to 1995.

But, after 1990/91, the “soft-type”-separation of war parties via *Peace Keeping* was replaced more and more by “full force” and war-like events, beginning with the Gulf War 1991, and civil wars in the Caucasus region, in Central Asia, in Africa, and in the Balkans. “Missions” turned into long-lasting intense war between well armed and trained forces, with casualties going into the thousands, or saw genocide-like mass killings of people by organized armed gangs (former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Eritrea, Somalia, Liberia, Congo, Sierra Leone, East Timor etc.). Interventions to end such fighting were either missing, or took the character of intensive, regular and/or irregular war.

Another phenomenon observed is the lack of final success by the intervening forces (Congo, Ivory Coast, Kosovo, Sri Lanka) with a shaky cease fire agreement, but no final peace. No wonder that some authors declined the value of interventions (“to make peace”) at all. Mission by a *Coalition of the Willing*, or of an allied force, became blurred. There are a number of reasons for this:

Firstly, the strict interpretation of sovereignty made international law look inhumane or irrelevant; the UN did nothing to stop the genocide in Nigeria (1966/67), East Pakistan (1971), Rwanda (1962, 1963, 1994), Burundi (1965, 1966, 1969, 1973, 1988), Liberia, Sierra Leone and in many other states; and even when the UN was present, like in Yugoslavia (1991-1995), or in Congo, mass killings occurred. The U.N. institutions widely ignored large-scale atrocities, but such inactivity was hurting the reputation of the UN, and questioned the purpose of international law itself.

Secondly, UN inactivity does not mean total inactivity by other organizations or states, making the UN superfluous or an organization for secondary or less significant (seen from a global perspective) problem where all UN-SC’s permanent members could agree to.

Thirdly: These overall circumstances forced the U.S. to take care of its own national and international priorities, interests and obligations. The position of U.S. administrations since 1945 was always clear: The *National Interest* would dictate politics, also alliances and pacts with other nations. High in the priority list is trade, access to resources and energy.

Fourth: Washington would disregard international law whenever it was considered as outdated, wrong, indirectly or directly supporting aggressors or governments involved in actions challenging U.S. security or interests, or if such governments were involved in mass killings or “ethnic cleansing”.

Fifth: Washington had to look to solutions outside the UN-mechanisms. So, there were three standards – one of the U.N. and following international law (weakened over the years), one by western powers, and another one by nations disregarding such law and their supporters.

Sixth: The conflict between different avenues of law had additional ramifications when the humanitarian violations were caused by a rather powerful nation, and the international community would not act: Humanity can be enforced only against states which are either willing to comply, or are politically and militarily weak.

Seventh: The UN changed the interpretation of its Charter when Boutros Ghali and Kofi Annan interpreted the established sovereignty of nations into a kind of “sovereignty of individuals” by enforcing human and humanitarian rights. However, this alone (see Sudan, Somalia etc.) will not change the behavior of failed or rogue states.

Finally, to encounter political and military shortcomings, NATO acted in the name of the UN, or on already existing UN-SC resolution, making such interventions somehow legal (Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan). The U.S. as “lead nation” of NATO is automatically involved in such interventions or is convincing NATO to support U.S. actions.

Strangely, just recently some countries began to condemn humanitarian intervention, so Russia and China (see the Chinese-Russian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, July 18, 2001). Moscow would not even permit any CSCE/OSCE, Red Cross, or any other organization or NGO go to Chechnya, or in places, which Russia interprets as “internal”. China’s position is identical.

Washington always tries to base its politics with higher aims: On the “legal front” already shortly after 1945, “moral-exceptionalism” won over the school of legal Purism. Purists want a strict application of international law. Non-Purists regard a strict interpretation of international law (and sovereignty) as inhuman, politically unwise, and as an excuse for aggression and oppression. Correct, the UN-SC has the right to decide about interventions, but it has, in a number of severe cases, failed to do so, or could not find enough states to support an intervention, or the intervention force was totally inadequate (Congo), or was limited to an ineffective observer mission (Rwanda, Sudan), or was anyway blocked by a veto. In the cases where action was seen as justified, the traditional interpretation of UN Charter Art. 2, Para. 4 (the use of force against another state is illegal), and especially of Art. 2, Para. 7 (“No other State, and no international organization may scrutinize what is happening inside a state except with the full consent of the territorial state”) was only recently disregarded, when humanitarian reasoning got the upper hand.

One additional remark from a military point of view: Liberal law advocates often excuse atrocities by civil war-parties and terrorists, but on the other hand demand strict adherence of governments or of intervention-forces to the Hague Conventions and Geneva Agreements. When armed civilians are opening fire on troops, disregarding *ius in bello*, or when terrorists are arrested and detained, “hard core”-law proponents demand the treatment of such persons as “freedom fighters” or as “soldiers”, but accuse soldiers immediately of inhuman behavior and atrocities when they kill civilians in gun battles or in air attacks and even try to sue NATO and generals. Likewise, Presidential or political rhetoric about “total, unyielding war against aggression and terrorism”, is contradicted by legal proceedings against individual soldiers doing exactly that.

Many governments simply look for excuses for not participating in interventions. Such could have (a) economic reasons like oil (Sudan would be a recent case), (b) the irrelevance of the states where such atrocities occur (like some states in southwestern Africa), (c) the place would be seen as “too dangerous” (Somalia), or there were (d) no convincing arguments for sending a force at all (see the debate about a small EU-intervention force to “protect” the election in Congo end of June 2006). It is an irony that African states are unwilling to send an adequate force to the Republic of Congo, so the UN has to look to Latin American states and to Europe. Other obstacles for participating in interventions are ideology, a different political judgment, a resisting public opinion, ignoring signals which indicate the outbreak of a crisis, weak or wrong decision-making, or a traditional unwillingness to provide military and humanitarian assistance (most Islamic states). A reluctance of western governments to accept human losses, prevents not only participations, but can result in a rather reluctant engagement-behavior of the deployed troops in an operational area (see the incidents in Kosovo, spring 2003).

America, Moral Exemptionalism and Ideology

There are numerous books, political papers and articles explaining America’s rise and role in global Affairs, and it is remarkable that since the early decades, America always saw herself as a nation with a *Mission* in the world. The powers of ideas and ideals are carrying this mission along: Puritanism and Calvinism (*A City Upon a Hill*, 1630); liberal movements (evident in the Constitution), *Manifest Destiny*; “*The trade of the world will be ours*”; American law; American order; American civilization; the American flag; “*Speak softly an carry a big stick – you will go far*” (Theodore Roosevelt in his Minnesota State Fair Speech, Sept. 2, 1901); „*The world must be made safe for democracy*” (1917); *The Four Freedoms* (1941); the *Containment*-Policy (1948), the creation (and foundations) of NATO (1949), and the current war against terrorism are expressions of such beliefs. Based on such analysis,

one can derive a number of conclusions about American politics and decision-making, following public attitudes and their shifts, like isolationism, internationalism, cyclic movements favoring rise or decline, *Asia First*, *Europe First*, *America First*, *Engagement and Enlargement*, promoting democracy, human rights or human dignity (this difference is demonstrating a dislike of U.N.-norms) and others. There are phases of a higher acceptance of intervention, and phases of less popularity of military actions. There are periods of *Deficit Spending* and periods of *Austerity-Policy*.

America's political and ideological rhetoric is one of a global power. The frequent reference to the founders of the Republic ("The Founding Fathers") or to former Presidents, the use of religious terms (*Providence*, *The Chosen People*, *City Upon a Hill*, *The New Canaan*, *The Promised Land*, *Holy Experiment*, *Garden of Eden*, *Providence*, *New Heaven* etc.) reflects tradition, symbolism, a mix of religion and secularism, political religion and religion in politics, unseen in other western nations. America's rise to power and finally world dominance, expressed in terms like *American Century*, *American Empire*, *Pax Americana*, *American Dominance* etc., is not different of the rise of other nations before, but Europe's rather short global role (the British Empire's time as a dominant power, lasted for three or four decades only) cannot be compared to America's power which lasts now for more than 100 years.

Naturally, America will base its decisions on higher interests, often on enhanced values and purposes, and mostly also on legal aspects, or on a combination of religious manifestations which are linked to politics, and instrumental in addressing the American people. On the other hand, all decisions are strictly rational.

Intervention and New Types of Military Organizations

War-fighting is more expensive, and there is a desire to make interventions shorter. Many countries transform their military forces to fight interventions more efficiently, or make such missions the major (and sometimes the only) task for their armed forces. The US Army organized six specific brigades for "light interventions", the U.S. Marine Corps is seeing itself as an "intervention force", the U.S. Air Force has now ten Expeditionary Wings for intervention-type warfare (which includes now all wings); the U.S. Navy is building fast amphibious ships and maintains pre-positioned storage ships in all three oceans. NATO organized airmobile Reaction Forces for interventions "out of area", and the EU plans 13 (or 14) small Battle Groups for limited interventions.

The U.S. forces are facing a transition/transformation period to handle crises with more speed, more firepower, and with all available technological means. The ideas are to send such forces into a crisis area (on a global scale) within weeks, and win quickly. The U.S., NATO, EU and countries participating in such missions, stress the need for international interoperability to handle efficiently staffing, procedures, planning, communications, transportation, logistics, aerial warfare, all types of (intense) ground combat, naval engagements, irregular fighting, terrorist attacks, nation building etc. Therefore, we experienced over the last three decades, a change in the character of military organization, training, equipment and activities in crises areas. The main issues for all type of interventions are interoperability, flexibility, transportability, risk-reduction, tempo and combat-superiority.

Crises Areas

In 1991, the Under Secretary for Policy of the Department of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to analyze probable trouble spots, where the United States could be forced to intervene. The result was presented in February 1992, when the Gulf Area, Korea, the Baltics, Panama and Central America, and the Philippines were seen as the most probable crisis areas. Additionally, the Pentagon wanted to prevent a strong hostile Europe. Exactly ten years later the same question was on the table again, and the same trouble spots were on the agenda, but now China and Russia were added to this list; the main issue now was if the U.S. could fight two engagements at the same time. After "9-

11” terrorism was added, and it has its origins in a number of critical areas which were already identified in 1991. A number of authors linked crises areas to politics, strategies and military forces.

Promoting Democracy and Critics

Promoting democracy via political pressure, military or humanitarian intervention, is not always successful, and not always makes sense: Many authors have warned the U.S. government that pushing democracy in states which have different values or expectations, can backfire when fundamentalists gain power and implement rigid policies to end democracy and individual self-determination.

Anti-Americanism is another issue: Especially socialist governments attacked the United States in the last two decades whenever Washington tried to point to violations of human rights or genocide. The intervention in favor of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, or of starving people in Somalia, or the ouster of the corrupt government in Haiti, Grenada, or in Iraq, caused a number of governments to point to the fate of American Indians, the bomber campaigns, incidents in Korea or to My Lay, or to American “imperialism”. So did the governments of Cuba, Brazil, Uruguay, now also Venezuela and Bolivia, plus European politicians who prefer “soft power” approaches and point to the evils of globalization and large corporations, but ignore demographics, inabilities of governments and corruption.

The Will to Act – Success and Failure

The last two decades had taught an additional lesson: Intervention requires (a) the will and a political interest to intervene of at least one nation, who is determined to act, (b) resources, (c) political acceptance by a number of other states, (d) a nation building-concept, and (e) the chance of success. Historical evidence shows that 50% of all U.S. interventions since the Spanish American War would not see the anticipated results. Money and time are sometimes hurdles, also other questions, like: How long will the American people accept the financial burdens of a long lasting intervention? How many body bags will remain a non-issue in mass media? Also, a failing government, no matter how evil or corrupt, will always find a number of states supporting its case; such “helping hands” are usually nations with a bad record on their own. And: The will to change and to reform is often not present.

Rhetoric and Decision-Making

Current approaches to global and national issues are found in basic documents like the ones published by the White House, the Department of Defense, the Department of State or other federal agencies. Important information will come from Presidential speeches, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, also from the Assistant to the President for National Security (the National Security Adviser, NSC) and other political leaders or representatives of Congress. Top ranking military, *Speakers* and *Committee Chairman* of Congress Committees, representatives of the intelligence services, are other key actors who participate in fact finding and decision-making.

Military Aspects

America’s national interests were always present when an intervention was on the agenda or a friendly nation asked for help and was supported. After the Second World War, the United States felt the obligation to defend other states against Communist aggression, subversion and threats. With an adequate number of military forces, and with bases around the world, the Soviet Block and China were contained. In a number of cases, Washington made it clear that it would intervene, like in the Philippines after 1945, in Iran 1946 (even considered the use of nuclear weapons), in Greece 1947/48, or it fought classical wars, like in Korea, Vietnam or the Gulf.

Military aspects should play a dominant role in political decision-making, but in the past politicians (Secretaries of Defense Johnson, McNamara and currently Rumsfeld) often disregarded military advice and decided only on pure political considerations. The *Thesis* went into the structures of the White House (President, National Security Council), the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Unified Commands and staffs, C4ISR, modern warfighting etc., to elaborate on decision-making processes.

Change of Terminology

Besides the restraints in UN language, the U.S. terminology of intervention has changed many times, which becomes evident when one compares Presidential language since 1945, the editions of the National Security Strategy of the United States, the last editions of Department of Defense Joint Publication manuals, the various editions of Army Field Manual FM 3.0/100-5 Operations, or the very different last two editions of the Air Force Basic Doctrine. The reasons for these changes are the shifts in the political, strategic and war-fighting environment; doctrines and manuals simply had to adapt. An intervention can be a show of force, an “air only”-operation (*Operation Allied Force*, *Operation Desert Fox*), or is classical war in all three spheres of warfare. Fighting terrorism recently became a new type of war, which only partially fulfills the characteristics of traditional war. Asymmetrical war (“Hybrid War”) became a centerpiece of current doctrines which downplays classical war, but U.S. forces are mainly fighting such “outdated” classical wars, like in 1991, in 1999, in Afghanistan and Iraq. Intervention simply became a general term for all arrays of military operations, including humanitarian activities, peace support and stability operations of different intensity, plus nation building, a new priority for the U.S. policy, which Washington wanted to avoid because of political complications and costs.

d) Research Aims:

Basic Considerations

A long line of books and outstanding articles published in the U.S. over the last years were analyzing the current political processes within the U.S. government, military matters, intelligence, weapons of mass destruction, arms control and verification, analyzing debates within the military leadership, force-transformation, the defense budget, homeland security and national strategy, but also Presidential decisions and military doctrines. There were different types of interventions described, like *Peace Keeping*, sanctions, preventive (and preemptive) intervention, crisis de-escalation procedures, legal issues, the nature of political, economic, military and humanitarian interventions, combinations of such policies, and the variations of earlier and new terminology.

“Top Down” Approach

This *Thesis* is written from a U.S. point of view. It is therefore centered on U.S. policy and decision-making. It will describe the issue of intervention – within the limits of a *Thesis* - in a broad top-down approach: Geopolitical issues, some theoretical and macro-political issues, like national, international or legal ones, followed by an overview of conflict (crisis) management and doctrines, political and military decision-making and various aspects of intervention. As a complementary aspect, also the UN-procedures are explained. The decision-making process within the U.S. administration is described in a general way, including the *National Interest* and the executive powers of the President. A historical overview of U.S. interventions since 1800 is explaining some political and military aspects of intervention in the past and presence.

Selected Questions

How do the U.S. foreign-policy and military decision-making institutions (White House, Department of State, Department of Defense) decide, and follow such decisions traditional and ideological patterns?

The questions chosen for this *Thesis* are:

1. What are the determining geopolitical, theoretical, political, legal and ideological foundations and parameters of America’s intervention policy?
2. The role of the United Nations? The importance of the UN is underlined by the fact that the U.S. in justifying interventions regularly quotes UN-Security Council Resolutions or the UN *Charter* to legalize interventions.

3. How is decision-making accomplished? (The National Interest, Executive Powers)
4. The framework of military decision-making?
5. The reasons for U.S. intervention, history of U.S. intervention-policy, success or lack of success?
6. The U.S. experienced paradigmatic shifts like Pearl Harbor and „9-11“, but what were the long-term effects of these shifts?
7. Is there proof of a continuation in US security and foreign policy, or do we observe changes and ideological shifts? Have such shifts to do with realist-idealist approaches of advisors, trends, believes, or are they basically the result of the overall political situation or of dramatic events?
8. *Conflict Prevention, Conflict Managment ?*
9. The types of interventions and doctrines, intelligence issues, and the most common reasons for interventions?
10. What challenges will the U.S. face and how does the U.S. answer current challenges with the given institutions and decision-making?
11. Linkage of ideology, politics and decision-making?
12. How is decision-making accomplished? (The *National Interest*, Executive Powers, the National Security Council)
13. The framework of military decision-making?
14. The reasons for U.S. intervention, history of U.S. intervention-policy, success or lack of success?

e) Methods of Research:

Methods

The *Thesis* follows the development of U.S. foreign policy and decision-making from the 19th century till today, but the emphasis is on the last two decades, when intervention not only became a substitute for war but also a receipt for solving political, strategic, economic and humanitarian problems. The *Thesis* analyzes also critically the assumption that interventions can solve all problems weak or failing (failed) states encounter. But failures occur not necessarily because interventions are basically wrong, but they cannot solve the many problems such countries have on hand, like historical burdens, value differences, ethnic and religious problems, accepted oppression, incapable leadership, poverty, demographic changes, migration, urbanization, organized crime and environmental problems.

The *Thesis* will also deal with the classical geographical-geopolitical-geostrategic and geoeconomic patterns (and also self-perception) of the United States, with the international order, international law, considerations about the role of America in the world and finally will describe shortly decision-making in Washington, including the role of the United Nations, especially of the UN Security Council.

Taxonomy of content follows these patterns (See: Chapters). Heuristics about the classification of states, politics and developments after 1918, and after 1945, were continued by new approaches after 1989/90 and later on, and were (are) subject of many books and articles published in the last twenty years.

Basic Sources

The work is mainly based on primary documents and secondary literature. Both types were available to the author either from his own large library, libraries in the U.S. (Library of Congress, Butler Library of Columbia University, New York City Library). Much support came from the U.S. Embassy in Vienna, and some help was provided by the Internet. The following sources were used:

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Official Literature:

- 1) Documents from the U.S. Government, like papers and documents from the White House, the Defense Department, the Department of State, Congressional Hearings, Publications of the Superintendent of Governments/U.S. Government Printing Office, and from the *Congressional Quarterly*. This includes some 30 new strategy papers published by the White House, the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State, the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- 2) The NSC is also publishing a number of papers, like the *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* (November 2005). Many papers come from commissions, like *Mapping the Global Future* (National Intelligence Council, 2020 Project, Dec. 2004), *Rebuilding America's Defenses* (The Project for the New American Century, September 2000), *America's National Interest* (Commission on the National Interest, July 2000), *New World Coming - American Security in the 21st Century* (U.S. Commission on National Security, Sept. 1999), plus other commissions working on strategic issues, on weapons of mass destruction, arms control, export strategies, the future of NATO etc.
- 3) Additionally, the Department of Defense, and its institutions (like the armed forces), publish a number of documents, like the service's annual *Posture Statements*, and there are publications of the National Defense University (books, reports, drafts, studies), books and magazines of the Army War College, Naval War College, Air War College, and of the U.S. Marine Corps. Many professional associations publish military magazines of high quality.
- 4) Congress publishes regularly reports about hearings which contain substantial information on national security affairs, but also on details of policy, weapon-systems, threat-estimates etc.
- 5) In regard to economic affairs, the publications of the *Office of the U.S. Trade Representative* should be mentioned. Economic analysis comes from the *Chairman of Economic Advisers* (to the President) and the *Federal Reserve System*.
- 6) The *United States Institute of Peace* (established by Congress) became a major source for analyzing various aspects of "classical" interventions and conflict management, especially for Afghanistan and Iraq. Of interest are papers by the *U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency*, the *Woodrow Wilson International Center*.

Semi-Official Sources:

- 1) Think tanks like RAND, Brookings Institutions, BDM, Battelle, Pacific Forum, Heritage Foundation, Hoover Institution, CSIS, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, Council on Foreign Relations, Carnegie Endowment, American Enterprise Institute, Hudson etc., publish studies and reports, especially on national security issues, often ordered by U.S. Government agencies.
- 2) An important role must be conceded to the *Congressional Research Services* and its outstanding analytical research papers.

Other Sources:

- 1) Books.
- 2) Articles published in political and economic weekly magazines, in journals military related publications; daily newspapers etc. (see Endnotes). In the library of the author are hundreds of books and thousands of articles dealing with the topics of this *Thesis*, only a limited number could be quoted.
- 3) Interviews and discussions with experts in Washington, DC, in Vienna, and in Alpbach, Tyrol.
- 4) My years in the U.S., my publications about US topics and international issues (geopolitics, strategy, history, political theory, security policy, conflict theory, international law and neutrality, political ideology, international organizations (NATO, CSCE/OSCE), military sciences, aerial warfare, diplomacy, terrorism, intelligence, economic theory and politics, defense industry, demography, US film industry), over the last decades, teaching assignments (universities, Landesverteidigungsakademie

Wien, Univ.-Zentrum Schlaining), and my experience in the (Austrian) Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung (Air Force, intelligence, General Staff Group B; operational planning, NATO PfP-affairs in the Air Staff, MoD), gave me additional background.

Use of Libraries and of the Internet:

- 1) The author used his own large library, and libraries in the U.S. (Library of Congress, Butler Library of Columbia University, New York City Library).
- 2) Additional support came from the U.S. Embassy in Vienna.
- 3) The Internet is a valuable source for documents and specific issues and was increasingly used. Access to the services of the White House, State Department, Defense Department and the military services, was of outstanding help. News Services provide additional information (CBS, CNN etc.)

Professional Magazines, Weeklies and Daily Newspapers:

Many universities maintain excellent political science-, U.S. Government-, or security study-departments, with former government executives and high-ranking well known experts in the teaching profession who are also publishing in various influential magazines. Publications like *Foreign Affairs*, *Orbis*, *International Security*, *National Interest*, *Washington Quarterly*, *Policy Review*, and the publication of the *Academy of Political Science* should be mentioned here, but also publications like *Atlantic Monthly* and many others.

Professional magazines of high quality are *Air Force Magazine*, *Proceedings*, *Army*, *Strategic Review*, *Military Review*, *Airpower* and the *Marine Corps Gazette*. The *American Journal of International Law* is the most important when it comes to legal issues. Some European authors also write about U.S. policy, but good European publications besides *Survival* and *RUSI* are rare.

Valuable sources were TIME, NEWSWEEK, the *Standard Weekly*, and my access to newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *The Chicago News Press*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and others were available. But the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* were especially outstanding. My regular commentaries in the *Die Presse* and *Wiener Zeitung* required constant reading of excellent papers.

Professional Background of the Author, Publications of the Author (See also below)

My years in the U.S., my publications about US topics and international issues, like geopolitics, strategy, history, political theory, security policy, conflict theory, international law and neutrality, political ideology, international organizations (NATO, CSCE/OSCE), military sciences, aerial warfare, diplomacy, terrorism, intelligence, economic theory and politics, defense industry, demography, US film industry, over the last decades, and many teaching assignments (universities, Landesverteidigungsakademie Wien, Univ.-Zentrum Schlaining), and my experience in the (Austrian) Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung (Air Force, intelligence, General Staff Group B; operational planning, NATO PfP-affairs in the Air Staff, MoD), gave me additional background.

f) The Chapters of the *Thesis*

Introduction

Research Framework; Research Question; Methodology; Value Added

Part A

Geofactors; Basics, and Parameters of Intervention; International Order; Macro Politics; Cycles of History; International Law; Collective and Cooperative Security; Soft Power, Hard Power

Part B

Conflict and Intervention; The Framework; Conflict; Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management; Sanctions; Intelligence; Intervention – Basic; Considerations; Doctrines; Types of Interventions & Terminology; Homeland Defense; U.S. Force Transformation; Failed States

Part C

The UN and Intervention; UN Charter; UN General Assembly; UN Security Council; Interventions by other International Organizations

Part D

U.S. Decision-making Parameters; The National Interest; Mission, Crusade; Political-Strategic Parameters; Command Authority – The Executive Branch; The War Powers Act; Political-Military Relations; The Joint Chiefs of Staff; History of U.S. Intervention

Part E

The Intervention Process; Military Dimension; Intervention Planning;

Conclusions

Common Remarks; Scientific Points; Answering the Research Questions

g) Conclusions:**1. Common Remarks**

For the western world, and for the United States, *intervention* is the current way of war. U.S. interventions after 1945 began already in 1947, when Washington supported actively the anti-Communist government in Greece. Now, nearly 60 years later, U.S. forces are fighting two wars in Asia and have troops in many other countries actively engaged in supportative or humanitarian missions, or are engaged in fighting terrorism.

A development of the last decades was the contraction of national (sovereignty) rights, and the emphases on humanitarian and individual rights – even against the will of governments. This has changed the character of intervention and altered the interpretation of “classic” international law. Experience demonstrated that there are differences between the western political and humanitarian values and legal norms on one hand, and what many states in the “Arc of Crises” would consider as their preferred conditions of a new international order.

There was no “western thought” before 1918, and “western democracy” became a term only after 1945; “western values” are still not defined and are - contrary to 1945 - not anymore universally accepted. The U.S. Government could not convince a number of states about the advantages of western democracy. True, the chance and the will of governments to accept and to enforce universal principles was quite strong in 1945/46, but became weaker with the number of new independent states in Africa and Asia, and is today totally disputed by most Islamist states. The world faces now not only political or economic competition, but also an ideological and cultural competition (“cultural wars”, “wars of civilizations”). Living conditions in a number of Asian and Latin American states have worsened, because of population growth and political mismanagement. Another problem is that interventions not only are not accepted by a number of governments but hardly turn a bad situation into a better one – that is one experience of the last 50 years. (Many books and articles, and even UN-documents prove this point, but U.S. decision-makers are convinced that chances are intact and must be exploited.)

The United States (government, Congress, NGOs) sees interventions often as a humanitarian necessity, but also wants to support friendly nations. True, interventions often serve the *National Interest*, or

should guarantee western or American influence, including protecting areas and issues of geopolitical, geostrategic, or geoeconomic importance (like energy supply), but in most cases in the past, such motives were missing. *Nation Building*, is not a task of military interventions, but it is now often accompanying interventions, and is sometimes seen even as a strategic instrument to limit Chinese or Islamic influence in Asia and especially in Africa.

Failures in post-intervention phases are often the result of errors by decision makers, lack of understanding of local issues, a disregard of needs of the people, of quick but wrong solutions, lack of patience and self-serving optimism. On the side of the supported, corruption, drug and organized crime cartels, ongoing internal war, political destabilization, population explosions, left-wing social-economic experiments, feuding elites or resistance to change is typical (see Afghanistan or Iraq today).

2. Answering the Research Questions

The Research Questions of the *Introduction* were - within the given boundaries of this *Thesis* – answered in a substantial way:

What are the determining geopolitical, theoretical, political, legal, and ideological foundations and parameters of America’s intervention policy? The macro-politician and ideological parameters of America’s intervention policy were explained in Part A. Evidently, the geo-factors are embedded in the political-strategic thoughts of the elites, no matter if such elites are liberal, conservative, or neo-conservative. Because America is an island, U.S. policy is not much influenced by the considerations of other nations, but by macro-considerations.

Washington is oriented to Europe and Asia in a rather balanced way, no matter if there are periods of a stronger leaning to one side or the other. The U.S. tries to maintain a *balance of power* which sees the U.S. as paramount nation on the globe and self-interest will try to prevent hostile coalitions. All dangers for America’s hegemony will come from the Eurasian continent. Containing Eurasian powers is a must for U.S. Governments.

Also, institutions and international law have lost their former magnitude. The substitute is the “return of the state”, and more unilateral decision-making of nations. Legal considerations are based in the UN-Charter and other international-laws, but unilateral decisions are not decisions outside of international law, it is rather the inactivity of the UN-SC which makes such decisions necessary; one should be reminded the law-breakers are members of the United Nations too.

A judgment about U.S. policy and decision-making must look to ideology as well: The U.S. has a set of political and ideological traditions (usually linked together) which are different from European traditions which are now a product of post-World War II thinking. Europe is less ready to act militarily, and sees such activity only as instruments of peace. Since the early beginning, the U.S. is much more prepared to use force.

Conflict Prevention and the types of interventions and doctrines, intelligence issues and the most common reasons for interventions? The *Thesis* delineates issues of conflict, interventions, intervention-doctrine and terminology, also deals with the causes of failure of nations. Conflict Prevention has largely failed and political inflexibility and endless debates replace decision-making. Neither the UN, nor the Union of African States, nor the OSCE are proper instrument to solve conflicts. Conflicts mainly end because they simply end (“burning-out” syndrome). The various types of intervention requires an intervention force tailored to the problem on hand; intervention should not be a band-aid for short-time solutions without long-term effects, only demonstrating the will to do something – even when this willingness might not alter the problem on hand. Doctrines are basically doctrines for the use of force; other rules are embedded in the ROEs. Ethnic problems, failed states, civil war and bad governance are the main causes of interventions, and war, famine and natural disasters are the reason for humanitarian interventions.

Intelligence would be one of the keys of a successful intervention; it is a necessary tool for looking into problems an intervention force might face. However, until today this specialty is still not fully serving political and military expectations. The reason for this is simply the inability to investigate into micro-cells planning events which might have a large impact. Most data must come from HUMINT - TECHINT brings mainly technical data.

The reasons for interventions are the reasons for war – changing an unsatisfactorily situation, caused either by an individual who does not accept the international system and tries to find out how much one could stretch the patience of others, or there might be, like in most cases, a multitude of problems, like underdevelopment, poverty, mismanagement, population growth, bad governance, internal terror and inhuman conditions. But America cannot solve all problems in the world – nobody can. There are always more problems than solutions.

The role of the United Nations? The importance of the UN is underlined by the fact that the U.S. is justifying interventions by quoting UN-SC Resolutions or the UN Charter. Even when the role of the UN is diminished, and U.S. rhetoric indicates a distancing from the UN-SC, Washington will always try to pull the UN-SC (at least partially) along and will quote resolutions and international law whenever of help to justify actions.

How is decision-making accomplished? The President uses his *executive powers*, can always frame interventions as parts of the national interest, to defend freedom and democracy or to defend the country against threats to security, or to other interests. Public opinion will support this policy as long as such interests can be linked to “higher” accepted interests. The history of U.S. intervention-policy shows a long line of acts in the name of ethics, morals, a higher order, rights and obligations, or defensive acts.

The framework of military decision-making? The framework of military decision-making is based on evidence, political orders, available means, and experience. Gradualism is out, maximum effort is in, guided by the desire that the civilian population of a country should not suffer more than acceptable.

The reasons for U.S. intervention, history, success or lack of success? The U.S. can deploy military power on a global scale always successful and can win quickly, thanks to operational-tactical superiority or technical supremacy. Politically, the opposing political forces (UN members, other powers, domestic sensitivities) must be taken into considerations. However, the U.S. will always try to forge an *Alliance of the Willing*. Success can be expected when the country (which is a target of an intervention) cooperates and when institutions remain either intact or can be established. However, intact institutions or new governments, or a new constitution, will not be enough to win over a society. 50% of all interventions fail after the end of fighting.

Is there proof of a continuation in US security and foreign policy, or do we observe changes and ideological shifts and what are such shifts? Have these shifts to do with realist-idealist approaches of advisors, trends, believes, or are they basically the result of the overall political situation? One can say that there is no difference between Democratic or Republican administrations. Even the most liberal presidents were, compared to European classifications, very conservative. U.S. policy after 1980 became more interventionist when it finally overcame the “Vietnam syndrome” and pseudo-isolationist tendencies in mass media reporting and public opinion. Reagan, Bush (sen.), Clinton and Bush intervened not only militarily, but also used political pressure and sanctions to enforce their interests whenever necessary. There is proof of a coherent U.S. foreign policy, and shifts are only marginal, because there is always a balance between realist and idealist views of the world.

h) Recommendations:

Further observation of the decision-making should include:

- The reduced power of Congress since 1990

- The impact of the *Neo-Conservatives* since 1990
- The failure of the Middle East initiatives of the U.S. Government
- Different estimates of the U.S. State Department and the Department of Defense
- Israel and the U.S. Administrations
- The conflicts between civilian and military leadership
- Intervention and terminology
- The role of the Neoconservatives in the last years in forging U.S. foreign policy.

i) New Scientific Results:

1. There is a verbal and a practical junction of *War* and *Intervention*.
2. The U.S. sees the UN as an instrument to promote U.S. interests, but when such promotion cannot be achieved, the U.S. will act independently.
3. Even when acting independently, the U.S will always try to make its moves legal and give it legitimacy.
4. The U.S. does not care how its allies might judge an intervention, either from a political, practical, or moralistic point of view; however, the U.S. seems more often right than wrong. Europe looks weak, and quick decision-making is missing.
5. Conflict Prevention does not work.
6. Intelligence is the weakest part of the intervention process.
7. New emerging types of warfighting can be successful under ideal warfighting conditions and tactical situations, but do not guarantee success.
8. Success or failure of interventions is hard to measure.
9. The balance between the Foreign Policy Agenda (mainly represented by the President), and the Domestic Agenda (mainly the tasks of Congress) decides if the overall tendency of the public is more intervention-oriented (internationalistic), or more isolationist-oriented. Over the last 50 years, isolationist tendencies definitely became weaker.

j) Exploitation of Scientific Results:

The value added can be summarized the following way:

1. The combination of geopolitical, political, strategic and other areas in regard to intervention is presented. (This is a new approach to the problem, which will be dominant in the coming decades, and might be crucial for the western world. And: History usually explains the presence.)
2. There are ideological and social forces which drive America's politics and also intervention policy.
3. Intervention, originally an instrument (mainly of the UN) for *Peace Keeping*, *Peace Enhancement*, *Peace Making*, and *Nation Building*, has turned into "war-like" scenarios. The former difference between peace, crisis, war, and various kinds of interventions in different and ever-changing environments is evidently blurred. U.S. official publications do not see much difference between *Peace Making* and war.
4. U.S. strategy and U.S. forces are currently in a transformation process, which should enable the military to react faster and with more impact to future requirements. (The same is true for

Europe and a number of other countries like Russia and China.) War planning is sped-up; problems for interventions are explained.

5. The combination of geopolitical, political, strategic and other areas in regard to intervention is presented. (This is a new approach to the problem, which will be dominant in the coming decades, and might be crucial for the western world. And: History usually explains the presence.)
6. The international system is changing, and so is the role of states, which either will lose their classical sovereignty or the current institutionalism will fail. It is shown that states regained their importance at the expense of the institutions (the UN lost its importance, but so did others).
7. Finally, the key-value of this *Thesis* is the presentation of a rather complete (*horizontally* and *vertically*) picture of the complex issues of interventions.

These issues are embedded in the *Thesis*' chapters in a rather integrated way, following the structure of Parts, Chapters, and Sub-Chapters, and when necessary with additional explanations and differentiations.

k) List of the Author's Publications on the Topic:

(This list contains a selection of published contributions to books, studies, monographs and articles.)

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I) Curriculum Vitae (Professional-Scientific):

Friedrich W. Korkisch

Personal Data: Date of Birth: Aug-24, 1940 Citizenship: Austria

Education: Santa Barbara City College: *Associate of Arts*, 1970/71; University of Michigan, English Literature Institute: *Proficiency Certificate*, 1963; Universität Wien: Political Science and Philosophy, History, Sociology, Economic Theory, International Law 1981-1984, *Magister Phil.* Jan-30, 1985; Universität Wien, Rechtswissenschaftliche Fakultät: Lehrgang für Internationale Studien – Völkerrecht und Internationale Beziehungen (Seminars of International Studies: International Relations and International Law): *Diploma*, 1986; Bildungszentrum Schloss Hofen (Vorarlberg): American-European Summer Academy: International Relations and Foreign Policy, 1988

Teaching Assignments: As **Lecturer:** General Staff Courses (1986-2006): 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th 16th and 17th Course; Landesverteidigungsakademie: Strategy, Air Operations, Air Tactics, Geopolitics, Doctrines, Aerospace Law, Mass Media; University of Vienna, Dept of Social Sciences: Seminars, Political Theory, Political Ideas (1994, 1995); As **Adj. Professor:** The International University, Vienna, A-1070 Vienna: 2002-2003 (6 seminars)

Military Education: Infantry Officers's Course, Fort Eustis, VA,USA; Staff Officer's Course, Landesverteidigungsakademie, Vienna, 1978; Higher Command Course, Landesverteidigungsakademie, Vienna, 1990.

Military Rank:Colonel dhmfD (Ret. Dec. 31, 2005)

Tasks: Chief of Documentation and Technical Development, Air Force Affairs; Director International Affairs – Air Force, Air Staff; Aerial Warfare and Space, Air Staff; Coordinator NATO and PfP Affairs/Air Legal Aspects, International Air Operations, Air Staff; 1972-2002; NATO Air Defense Committee (1998-2002),

Lecturer Strategic Leadership Course of the Federal Government: 2004, 2005, 2006

Diplomatic Service:Member of the Austrian Delegation to the CSCS/OSCE, OSCE, Vienna, Hofburg, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Military Adviser and Chief Representative to the OSCE, 1991-2002.

Journalist Activities: Member of the Austrian Press Corps; TV and radio commentaries about terrorism and security policy; Commentaries in *Die Presse* and other daily newspapers

Lectures, Presentations, Teaching Assignments:Europäisches Forum Alpbach (Politics, Security Policy); Europäisches Forum Alpbach EFA Film Workshop,

Wissenschaftskommission des BMLV: Strategic Advisory Subcommission; Economic Advisory Subcommission.

Alpbach Filmworkshop: Founder and lecturer, *Filmworkshop Alpbach* (EFA, since 1999)

Memberships: Österreichische Gesellschaft für Außenpolitik; Österreichisches College, Vienna; International Studies Association, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; Österreichischer Journalisten Club; Member Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien; Member Naturhistorisches Museum Wien; Member Technisches Museum, Wien;

Current Positions: Direktor Institut für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik/Center for Foreign and Security Policy, Wien-Santa Barbara, CA; Member of the Science Board, BMLV; Düsseldorfer Institut für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik (Repräsentative of Landesverteidigungsakademie, Wien); Member of the Board, Austrian College/Europäisches Forum Alpbach; Director Film Workshop, EFA, Alpbach; President Club Alpbach Wien; Member of the Editorial Board Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift (ÖMZ).

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