



## **The geoeconomic pivot of the global war on terror: US Central Command and the war in Iraq**

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Author(s)	Morrissey, John
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## The Geoeconomic Pivot of the Global War on Terror: US Central Command and the War in Iraq

John Morrissey

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

President Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Address,  
20 January 1980 <sup>1</sup>

### ***Introduction***

In January 1980, President Jimmy Carter affirmed his administration's commitment to protecting vital energy assets in the Middle East in a State of the Union address that spoke of America's challenge in securing a region his National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, had termed an *arc of crisis*. Over twenty-five years later, the *arc of crisis* has become part of an *axis of evil*, yet its geoeconomic importance remains precisely the same. In 1980, what was at stake in the Persian Gulf, according to then Defense Secretary, Harold Brown, was 'the economic and political well-being of the United States and its allies', and if they were 'deprived of access to the energy resources of the Gulf,' the result would be 'collapse of our allies and the world economy'.<sup>2</sup> In 2006, the bipartisan Council on Foreign Relations report, *National Security Consequences of U.S. Oil Dependency*, concluded that because 'the United States alone has the capacity to protect the global oil trade against the threat of violent obstruction', there is a perennial need for 'a strong US military presence in key producing areas and in the sea lanes that carry foreign oil to American shores'.<sup>3</sup>

The ongoing war in Iraq is part of a much longer American military involvement in the Middle East that, since the late 1970s, has revolved around the United States' positing of the Persian Gulf as a *geoeconomic pivot*,<sup>4</sup> vital to US and global economic health.<sup>5</sup> The defence of this pivotal region was entrusted to a newly-created unified command, United States Central Command (CENTCOM), and the story of its initiation, mission and deployment is critical to our understanding of the current war in Iraq, and to recognizing why even the US withdrawal of ground troops there will not end America's long war in the

Middle East. Despite much crucial work that has focused on the cultural logics and imperial ideologies of US involvement in Iraq, there has been remarkably little interrogation of the underlying political economy of the Iraq War and broader war on terror, and few have documented the historical political economy of the United States military presence in the Middle East in detail. To this end, this chapter offers a critical reading of the historical political economy of CENTCOM, the chief body responsible for the US *shaping of the Middle East* since the emergence of the Persian Gulf region as an area of *vital interest* for US and global capitalism in the late 1970s.<sup>6</sup> In providing historical context to recent American intervention in the Middle East, the chapter seeks to shed light upon some of the key strategic and geoeconomic priorities that underlie the current war on terrorism and its geographic focus on Iraq.

### ***The Rapid Deployment Force concept: Southwest Asia and the Carter Doctrine***

US concerns for safeguarding energy resources in the Middle East has been a component of US foreign policy for successive administrations since 1945, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt committed to backing King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud's reign in Saudi Arabia in return for 'assuring the flow of Persian Gulf oil'.<sup>7</sup> It was a 'promise that has been reaffirmed by every succeeding President, without regard to party', and support for the use of military force to protect the flow of imported petroleum from the region has enjoyed bipartisan support in Washington since that period.<sup>8</sup> However, it was the turbulent 1970s – marked by oil crises, the collapse of the US-supported Shah in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan – that precipitated the designation of the Gulf region as an area of *vital interest* to the United States and its allies, and prompted the establishment of a suitable military force for its defense. That force would become known as the *Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force* (and later as US Central Command), and would be the chosen instrument to implement the Carter Doctrine.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1970s, the idea of a rapidly deployable force that could be efficiently dispatched to a crisis region was not new to the US military; historically, the Marine Corps had occupied that role and indeed had intervened in the Middle East in the post-World War II period.<sup>10</sup> In 1961, US Strike Command was set up at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.<sup>11</sup> Formed from amalgamating various Army and Air Force units, Strike Command was the first attempt at building a unified command to 'provide an integrated, mobile, highly combat-ready force' for military deployment in critical 'remote areas'.<sup>12</sup> The development of a new strategic transport aircraft, the C-5A, and a new sealift vessel, the Fast Deployment Logistics ship, facilitated the deploying of such a force directly from MacDill Air Force Base.<sup>13</sup> Strike Command failed, however, as an effective unified command for two main reasons: first, the US military was overstretched significantly during the Vietnam War; and, secondly, the non-involvement of the Marine Corps and Navy inhibited its unified command potential.<sup>14</sup> It was replaced in 1971 by US Readiness Command, but

this command too met with a series of military bureaucratic impediments that rendered it effectively a non-combatant command, occupied mostly with planning and training.<sup>15</sup>

The 1970s proved to be a watershed for US foreign policy in the Middle East. The oil crises of 1973 and 1974 brought into sharp relief the region's key geoeconomic importance, and calls for US military intervention to solve such crises slowly began to discursively air in influential Washington circles.<sup>16</sup> US commitment to militarily safeguarding access to the region was subsequently refocused from the outset of the new Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter in 1977. An influential National Security Council review of American foreign policy and national security, carried out in mid-1977, identified the Persian Gulf region as the new frontier in Cold War relations. The review was conducted in the light of nuclear *strategic equivalence* with the USSR, and National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, saw countering the Soviet threat in the region as central to reasserting American power overseas in the aftermath of defeat in the Vietnam War.<sup>17</sup> To that end, a specific challenge for US military posture was envisaged as the safeguarding of access to energy assets in the region, and this key concern was mirrored in a simultaneous Presidential Review Memorandum 10 (PRM-10) from the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Several subsequent National Security Council decisions culminated in Presidential Decision 18 (PD-18) in August 1977, which recommended the establishment of a *quick-reaction* force composed of mobile light infantry and backed by strategic air- and sea-lift capabilities.<sup>18</sup> The US withdrawal from Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya in 1969 meant that the US had lost the 'last of its great Middle Eastern air bases';<sup>19</sup> therefore, the new tactical force was designed for 'strategic mobility independent of overseas bases and logistical support'.<sup>20</sup>

In March 1978, President Carter announced that he had instructed his Secretary of Defense to initiate a new *Rapid Deployment Force* to 'defend our interests throughout the world'.<sup>21</sup> Leaked press reports of PD-18, four months later, confirmed that *world* as specifically the Gulf region, and for its defense the US had committed 100 000 troops, four aircraft carriers and three Air Force wings totalling 200 planes.<sup>22</sup> No budgetary support for PD-18, however, came until early 1980, in the aftermath of President Carter's defiant State of the Union Address, which spelt out US intentions to use military force in defense of the Gulf region. A number of developments in a turbulent 1979 had raised the Rapid Deployment Force to the status of an urgent geopolitical project: the removal of the Shah in Iran; growing unease of the other US *pillar* in the region, Saudi Arabia (over ongoing crises in the Horn of Africa); the Tehran hostage crisis; and finally the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. On March 1, 1980, the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) became officially operational. New strategic and logistic ships and transport aircraft were commissioned, and the RDJTF Headquarters was set up at MacDill Air Force Base and assigned the following mission: 'to plan, jointly train, exercise and be prepared to deploy and employ designated forces in response to contingencies threatening US vital

interests'.<sup>23</sup> President Carter's earlier announcement that the new rapid-reaction force was devised for deployment throughout the world was quickly revised once the force was actually established; the Persian Gulf region became the stated exclusive focus. The *area of concern* of the new RDJTF, seen in figure 1, mirrored geographically the various crises that had developed across the Middle East and Horn of Africa in the late 1970s, and refocused US foreign policy in the region.

As with its predecessor, Strike Command, the RDJTF was laden with bureaucratic command issues from the beginning, as its assigned forces would have to come from other commands worldwide (albeit from all four armed services). By 1981, the chief specialist on the Middle East at the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis in Washington, Jeffrey Record, had concluded that the RDJTF was a 'fatally flawed military instrument for the preservation of uninterrupted U.S. access to vital Persian Gulf oil – the principal rationale underlying the force'.<sup>24</sup> For Record, without its urgent reform, 'the



Figure 1 **RDJTF Area of Concern, 1980** (Adapted from: US Department of Defense, *Annual Report, FY 1982*)

uninterrupted flow of oil from the Persian Gulf' would continue to constitute a 'threatened and inadequately defended vital U.S. interest in the region'.<sup>25</sup> Record's concerns were addressed immediately by the new Republican administration of Ronald Reagan, which committed a budget increase for the RDJTF of 85 percent for the Fiscal Year (FY) 1982, and proposed spending an additional \$17.5 billion on its reform over the next five years.<sup>26</sup> The Democrats may have established the idea of the RDJTF but the Republicans were keen to make it work, and work effectively, as the central instrument of US foreign policy in the Gulf. In April 1981, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger announced that the RDJTF would be converted into a separate regional geographic command, with full responsibility concentrated on *Southwest Asia*.<sup>27</sup> He argued before the House Committee on the Budget later that year that the US faced a greater threat in Southwest Asia than in NATO Europe and Northeast Asia combined.<sup>28</sup> This new geographic focus culminated in the RDJTF being converted into *United States Central Command* on January 1, 1983.<sup>29</sup> The US military's Unified Command Plan, the codification of its global ambition of *full-spectrum dominance*, was changed accordingly, with nineteen countries being incorporated into the new CENTCOM *Area of Responsibility* (AOR), seen in figure 2.<sup>30</sup>

CENTCOM's mission from the outset was to carry on from the RDJTF in acting as the military, geopolitical instrument of the Carter Doctrine. In its own words, it had 'evolved as a practical solution to the problem of projecting U.S. military power to the Gulf region from halfway around the world', and its central function was to 'project American power in the Middle East and East Africa'.<sup>31</sup> I have examined elsewhere the pervasive politico-cultural discourses that actively posit the United States military in the global role of policing, and protecting the world from terror and threat.<sup>32</sup> The Department of Defense's 2005 *National Defense Strategy*, for example, refers unproblematically to America's central role in the world in envisioning and securing an 'international order' fashioned in its interests.<sup>33</sup> Such discourses of liberal empire enable the kinds of unreflective assumptions inherent in US military mission statements that speak of solutions to the *problem of projecting power* to regions *halfway around the world*. Forming part, too, of a broader popular imaginary that defines the Middle East via essentialist equations of geography, identity, difference and terror, such geopolitical discourses have a profoundly exertive power in legitimating and allowing for geopolitical action and the exercise of military violence.<sup>34</sup> However, additionally, they function to take our attention away from the hard story: what can *not* be neatly abstracted and popularly packaged (such as the elite interests being served by aggressive geopolitics in *our* interests). What follows below is a reflection on the *critical economic interests* that are both propelling and being served by CENTCOM's geopolitical project in the Middle East.



Figure 2 **CENTCOM Area of Responsibility, 1983** (Adapted from: CENTCOM CINC General George Crist, *Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Posture of United States Central Command*, Washington, DC: Senate Armed Services Committee, 11 March 1986)

***CENTCOM's world: defending vital interests***

Stretching from the Horn of Africa, across the Yemens and the Arabian Gulf to Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, CENTCOM's AOR is focused on the most energy-rich region in the world. Since 1983, each commander of CENTCOM has affirmed to Congress the pivotally important role CENTCOM plays in safeguarding US and World economic strength by guarding, patrolling, and maintaining forward deployment in the Persian Gulf region.<sup>35</sup> In 1999, for example, CENTCOM CINC,<sup>36</sup> General Anthony Zinni, told the Senate Armed Service Committee that 'with over 65 percent of the world's oil reserves located within the Gulf states', the US and the West 'must have free access to the region's resources'.<sup>37</sup> CENTCOM Commander General John Abizaid reminded the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2006 of the region's *vital interests* to the United States:

It incorporates a nexus of vital transportation and trade routes, including the Red Sea, the Northern Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Gulf. It is home to the strategic maritime choke points of the Suez Canal, the Bab el Mandeb, and the Strait of Hormuz. It encompasses the world's most energy-rich region – the Arabian Gulf alone accounts for 57% of the world's crude oil reserves, 28% of the world's oil production, and 41% of the world's natural gas reserves.<sup>38</sup>

The Persian Gulf has long been posited as a special region, and the United States, and Britain before that, have consistently demonstrated a clear-cut economic logic of intervention when the free flow of petroleum has been threatened.<sup>39</sup> In 1981, Jeffrey Record, at the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis in Washington, urgently advised the Pentagon of the 'need for military action in the event of disruption'.<sup>40</sup> In 1985, Thomas McNaugher, Gulf expert at the Brookings Institution, argued that protecting the oil-rich states from external threat and deterring Soviet encroachment would require greater military assertion and agility.<sup>41</sup> When General George Crist assumed CENTCOM command in November 1985, he noted that it was regarded by many nations in the region as 'little more than a major intervention force designed to operate solely for U.S. purposes without their consultation or participation'.<sup>42</sup> This is hardly surprising when you consider CENTCOM's stated theater strategy.<sup>43</sup>

At the outset, CENTCOM had 222 000 troops at its disposal but the Reagan administration actioned immediate plans to increase this number in 1983.<sup>44</sup> By 1986, CENTCOM could call upon 400 000 troops.<sup>45</sup> In 1987, President Reagan issued CENTCOM with its first forward deployment order: to protect Kuwaiti oil tankers with US warships in the Persian Gulf. Reflagging them with the American ensign and escorting them through the Gulf was to protect them against possible attack from Iran or Iraq, then in the final stages of a brutal eight-year war. CENTCOM's foundational mission, according to Reagan, was to demonstrate 'U.S. commitment to the flow of oil through the Gulf'.<sup>46</sup> After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, CENTCOM quickly amassed a 500 000-strong defensive force to create a *Desert Shield* against the possible invasion of its key, oil-exporting ally in the region, Saudi Arabia. The swift passing of twelve UN Security Council resolutions against Iraq in only a few months was unprecedented in the forty-five-year history of the UN, and just seven months after the invasion, the US-led *Desert Storm* quickly restored the economic status quo and left the US in a stronger military position than ever before. Meanwhile, Iraq's and Kuwait's ecosystems lay in ruins, hundreds of thousands Iraqi soldiers and civilians had been killed, and the Middle East 'would never be the same again'.<sup>47</sup> The George F. Kennan Chair in National Security Strategy at the National War College of the National Defense University in Washington commented in 1994 that the war 'transformed the security structure of the Persian Gulf – a region that will remain the principal source of energy needs well into the next century'.<sup>48</sup> This expert in national security revelled in the reinvigorated US ascendancy brought about by



CENTCOM's war, which had 'prevented something truly terrible': a 'nuclear war by a tyrant in control of most of the energy supplies that are the lifeblood of the industrialized democracies of the world'.<sup>49</sup> The National Defense University Chair in question was Paul Wolfowitz, and ten years later, he would be a key architect and advocate in the Bush administration's extension of CENTCOM's war in the Middle East into the new century.

Since 1983, CENTCOM's perennial focus on the geopolitics of energy explains why its AOR did not include Israel, the Occupied Territories, Lebanon and Syria.<sup>50</sup> The traditional strategy of separating Persian Gulf issues from Palestinian ones underlines US foreign policy in the region as primarily a *geoeconomic* project in which the concerns of the State Department are dwarfed by the concerns of the Department of Defense.<sup>51</sup> President Bush's Defense budget for FY 2009, released in early February 2008, 'provides \$515.4 billion in discretionary authority' for the Defense Department, and an additional \$70 billion as 'an emergency allowance for the Global War on Terror'.<sup>52</sup> By comparison, the FY 2009 International Affairs budget for the Department of State, the US Agency for International Development and other foreign affairs agencies totals approximately \$39.5 billion.<sup>53</sup> Such numbers point to the Defense Department always winning out 'in any power struggle with the Department of State on Capitol Hill'.<sup>54</sup> Even General John Shalikashvili, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Clinton administration, pleaded in 1999 for more funding for the State Department: 'what we are doing to our diplomatic capabilities is criminal [...] we will be obliged to use military force still more often'.<sup>55</sup>

The emphasis on military force, rather than diplomacy, in dealing with the Middle East, was present from the beginning, as expounded by Pentagon advisor, Jeffrey Record: '[i]t should go without saying that military reputation, or the ability to use force successfully in defense of declared national interests, is desirable in a world where force remains the final arbiter of international disputes'.<sup>56</sup> The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reform Act in 1986 was particularly important for CENTCOM CINCs, as, from thereon, all combatant commanders 'had a unique chain of command arrangement, reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense rather than through the Joint Chiefs of Staff'.<sup>57</sup> This is not to suggest that CENTCOM commanders have been autonomous since 1986; however, they have played a much more active, rather than adjuvant, role in effecting US foreign policy in the Middle East, in comparison with their diplomatic counterparts in the State Department. Former CENTCOM CINC, General Norman Schwarzkopf, recalls revelling in a military-diplomatic role in which he felt like 'a kind of military ombudsman [...] overseeing advisors' work, administering \$1.6 billion a year in military programs, and solidifying relations with rulers and generals'.<sup>58</sup> In various ways, unified commanders have historically acted as 'America's viceroys',<sup>59</sup> and, indeed, the US military have even considered the lessons for a Pax Americana afforded by comparisons between US CINCs and the Roman Republic's Proconsuls.<sup>60</sup>

Other than resources and access to the top channels of American power, CENTCOM CINCS have always had one additional advantage over their State Department counterparts in negotiating and effecting US national security policy on foreign shores: their political-military brief does not compel them to ‘implicitly or explicitly pass judgement on the internal politics or regimes with which they do business’.<sup>61</sup> As James Robbins puts it, the ‘broader promotion of human rights or political change’ is not the ‘primary province of the combatant commander’.<sup>62</sup> This, of course, accounts for CENTCOM’s entirely pragmatic alliance with a host of brutal leaders in its AOR since 1983, from Saddam Hussein in Iraq to the current Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. For CENTCOM, human rights are way down its list of priorities.

A 1992 CENTCOM-commissioned report by Stephen Pelletiere and Douglas Johnson II, both then Professors of National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, is acutely revealing of what kind of interventionary practices CENTCOM would henceforth pursue. Their report, *Oil and the New World System: CENTCOM rethinks its Mission*, formed part of the CENTCOM 2000 project, run by the Strategy, Plans, and Policy Directorate of CENTCOM at MacDill Air Force Base. The report came out a year before the CENTCOM incursion into Somalia had failed, with the loss of eighteen Army Rangers (including Master Sergeant Gary Gordon, whose half-naked body was dragged horrifically through the streets of Mogadishu). Yet even before this, Pelletiere and Johnson II warned of Somalia-type operations taking CENTCOM’s focus away from its long-term mission:

at a time of shrinking financial resources, things cannot go on as before – economies must be made. The solution is to focus all of CENTCOM’s efforts on the Gulf, abandoning practically all other responsibilities [...] missions like Somalia conflict with CENTCOM’s main mission which is guarding Gulf oil. Thus Somalia type operations should be approached with extreme caution, and under no circumstances should they be allowed to escalate because they have the potential to wreck the system. [CENTCOM] has a crucial mission to perform – guarding the flow of oil. It cannot waste itself in non-essential operations, especially where it could at any time become bogged down.<sup>63</sup>

This clinical positing of what should constitute CENTCOM missions, and what should not, encapsulates the abstracted and indifferent US military outlook on the terrains, not worlds, it finds under its radar. For Pelletiere and Johnson II, humanitarianism (however that would look with CENTCOM) should simply never be on the agenda.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Guarding the Gulf: CENTCOM theater strategy for a global political economy***

To return to what has always been firmly *on* the agenda, consider CENTCOM CINC General Norman Schwarzkopf’s statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee, six months prior to Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990:

the greatest threat to U.S. interests in the area is the spillover of regional conflict which could endanger American lives, threaten U.S. interests in the area or interrupt the flow of oil, thereby requiring the commitment of U.S. combat forces.<sup>65</sup>

In February 1990, Schwarzkopf had already scripted the Gulf War. CENTCOM's geoeconomic mission to protect US vital economic interests in the Gulf compelled it to intervene. CENTCOM's success in its execution of the war confirmed it in its role as *Guardian of the Gulf*, and, in the war's aftermath, a series of CENTCOM-commissioned studies recommended a focused mission for the command henceforth, which neatly defined CENTCOM's mission around two concepts: *critical economic interests*, and *forward deterrence* of regional rivals.<sup>66</sup> Stephen Pelletiere's and Douglas Johnson II's 1992 report cited above offered the following recommendations to this end:

The study rejects the argument that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states can defend themselves. Only CENTCOM can do that [...] In effect, CENTCOM must become the Gulf's policeman, a function it will perform with mounting patrols.<sup>67</sup>

The *free* market system, as ever, was to be patrolled, and CENTCOM would perennially be given the mission to do it.

A Democrat in the White House from 1993 did not alter CENTCOM's mission. The Clinton administration's chief defense policy document for the Gulf region, *United States Security Strategy for the Middle East*, which came out in mid-1995, defined 'America's enduring interest in the security of the Middle East' around the following key components: assured access to Gulf oil (which is outlined in three pages); security of key regional partners (outlined in two pages); and a durable Arab-Israeli peace (outlined in one paragraph).<sup>68</sup> Secretary of Defense William Perry introduced the strategy document thus:

One of the most controversial questions the United States faces in the aftermath of the Cold War is when to use military force in this complex world. But there is little dispute that we must be prepared to use force to defend our vital interests: when the survival of the United States or its key allies is in danger, when our critical economic interests are threatened, or when dealing with the emergence of a future nuclear threat. Nowhere are these criteria met more clearly than in the Middle East.<sup>69</sup>

Later that year, CENTCOM CINC General James Binford Peay III outlined to the *Joint Force Quarterly* both CENTCOM's clear-cut geoeconomic mission and its military capabilities by citing the unprecedented rapid deployment of CENTCOM troops during Operation Vigilant Warrior in 1994:

On October 6, 1994, reports poured into the command center at [CENTCOM] that two Iraqi Republican Guard divisions were moving by both rail and heavy equipment transporters southward from their garrisons near Baghdad to assembly areas south of the Euphrates. Eight divisions threatened Kuwait with lead brigades located only fifteen miles from the border [...] CENTCOM at once modified on-the-shelf operational plans and orchestrated the deployment of units from all services in what became known as Operation Vigilant Warrior. Postured to prevent Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the command built both on the combat power of U.S. forward deployed and coalition forces and on American prepositioned equipment ashore and afloat to emplace a defensive force. On October 10, as the first U.S.-based aircraft began landing at airfields in the Persian Gulf and lead companies of the 24th Infantry Division began moving to tactical assembly areas, Iraq announced the withdrawal of reinforcing Republican Guard divisions thus defusing the situation.<sup>70</sup>

For General Peay, CENTCOM's mission in the mid 1990s was vitally important, precisely because maintaining 'regional stability and security in the Persian Gulf [was] integral to the political and economic wellbeing of the international community'.<sup>71</sup>

The Clinton administration saw the orientation of an effective national security posture as coinciding with a dominant *global economic posture*.<sup>72</sup> In 1999, for example, a Defense Department-sponsored Institute for National Security Studies review underlined that 'national security depends on successful engagement in the global economy'.<sup>73</sup> Deterrence of enemies in defense of critical economic interests was also an integral component of national security strategy during the Clinton presidency, and this was reflected in CENTCOM theater strategy. By the late 1990s, CENTCOM's Operation Desert Spring involved frequent training exercises each year, resulting in a 'near continuous presence' south of the Iraqi border in Saudi Arabia, which could better 'deter conflict, promote stability, and facilitate a seamless transition to war, if required'.<sup>74</sup> Throughout the 1990s, CENTCOM's self-declared purpose, espoused in its annual posture statements, echoed closely the Clinton administration's vision of when to use force 'to protect the United States' vital interest in the region – uninterrupted, secure U.S./Allied access to Gulf oil'.<sup>75</sup> CENTCOM CINC General James Binford Peay III told the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on National Security in 1997 that any disruption in the flow of petroleum from the Persian Gulf would 'precipitate economic calamity for developed and developing nations alike'.<sup>76</sup> His successor as CENTCOM CINC, General Anthony Zinni, echoed these sentiments and located CENTCOM's geoeconomic mission precisely in his 1998 report to the Senate Armed Services Committee:

America's interests in [the Central Region] reflect our beliefs in access to free markets, the Middle East Peace Process, protection of and access to regional energy resources, and reduce [sic] the proliferation of conventional and mass destruction weapons. The vast quantities of oil, gas, and other resources present in the gulf region, which includes 69 percent of the world's known oil reserves plus significant natural gas fields, are essential to today's global economies. Much of the oil exported from the Arabian Gulf countries passes through at least one of three important maritime choke points: the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, or the Bab el Mandeb between Yemen and Eritrea. When the Central Asian States are added to CENTCOM's AOR in 1999, the addition of their energy resources, currently estimated at 15-25 billion dollars of oil, will only increase the importance of the region to economies worldwide.<sup>77</sup>

The Bush administration's arrival in 2001 once again did not alter CENTCOM's theater strategy of forward deterrence in defense of vital energy assets for the US and global economy. As Secretary of Energy Spencer Graham declared to the House International Relations Committee in 2002, 'energy security' was, after all, 'national security'.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the administration's aggressive geopolitics in CENTCOM's AOR in the wake of the September 11 attacks did not occlude an ongoing and simultaneous security strategy of reform via *economic liberalization and integration*.<sup>79</sup> Coinciding with the militarism of President Bush's war on terror in the Middle East, for example, is a little-discussed geopolitical and geoeconomic strategy of securing Free Trade Agreements with key Gulf States. Free Trade Agreements were signed with Bahrain in 2004 and Oman in 2005 (both of which had the additional provisos of dropping all boycotts of Israel), and negotiations to secure similar Free Trade Agreements with UAE, Kuwait and Qatar are underway.<sup>80</sup> These agreements have already opened up the market for a host of foreign oil and gas companies, such as Exxon Mobil, Totalfina Elf and Royal Dutch Shell.<sup>81</sup> The Bush administration's *National Defense Strategy* in 2005 further illustrates a dual strategy of securing militarily 'strategic access' and extending 'global freedom of action'.<sup>82</sup> Its policy objective incorporated four interrelated strategic and geoeconomic concerns: promoting 'the security of the United States'; ensuring 'freedom of action'; helping 'secure our partners'; and protecting 'the integrity of the international economic system'.<sup>83</sup>

In CENTCOM's world, the hard economic discourse of vital interests has always been accompanied by a more pervasive and softer cultural discourse of bringing stability, freedom and democracy in the face of evil, barbarity and fundamentalism. This is not new, of course; the world has a depressingly long history of colonial discourse vilifying whole nations and securing the moral compass for their social and economic correction. From the English in sixteenth-century Ireland to the French in twentieth-century Algeria, colonial discourse has not only furnished us with abounding examples of the circulation

of imaginative geographical knowledges of *Othered* peoples, but has always been mobilized in tandem with geoeconomic interests.<sup>84</sup> For CENTCOM's war in Iraq (neatly situated within a broader war on terror), when we peel away the affective imaginative geographies of *us* versus *them* that legitimize the use of military force and perform the discursive trick of monopolizing our attention, ethics and conception of humanity, we are left with an overt geoeconomic project, which reveals ultimately that maintaining the conditions for a US-centered global economy, defined by a neoliberal political economic doctrine, is CENTCOM's central geostrategic priority.<sup>85</sup> CENTCOM has always equated *security needs* with *economic interests*; the orientation of a culturally-nuanced foreign policy has never been the agenda, which perhaps critics of US foreign policy that focus exclusively on its lack of cultural sensitivity and nous fail to acknowledge. In 2003, bringing Iraq back into the global political economy was an immediate imperative of US occupation. Consider, for example, the first news briefing on the progress on reconstructing and stabilizing Iraq, given by Paul Bremer as head of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA):

Now that [our] sanctions have been lifted, it's important for Iraq to reenter the world economy. The most obvious example of that is the sale of Iraqi oil, the first sale of Iraqi oil directly into the world market by the Iraqis. The bids went out about five days ago. They have been received yesterday. And I expect they will be opened announced [sic] here in the next 48 hours or so. And that is good news; it means Iraq will have reentered the world petroleum market.<sup>86</sup>

For Bremer, the 'main emphasis' was 'restoring economic activity', and this would have the effect of not only enhancing global economic health but simultaneously showing the Iraqis that they were now better off.<sup>87</sup>

### **Conclusion**

By way of conclusion, I want to return to a pivotal moment that set CENTCOM in motion: President Carter's State of the Union Address in 1980. In it, the scripting of the geoeconomic and geostrategic import of the Persian Gulf region could not be clearer:

The region which is now threatened by Soviet troops in Afghanistan is of great strategic importance: it contains more than two-thirds of the world's exportable oil. The Soviet effort to dominate Afghanistan has brought Soviet military forces to within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Straits of Hormuz, a waterway through which most of the world's oil must flow. The Soviet Union is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position, therefore, that poses a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil.<sup>88</sup>

And how correct he was in his declaration that the situation demanded ‘resolute action, not only for this year but for many years to come’.<sup>89</sup> In this chapter, I have placed the war in Iraq in the wider picture of US involvement in the Middle East since the late 1970s that has now culminated in the so-called global war on terror. No other region has been afforded more Defense Department budgetary support or has seen greater numbers of troops deployed in the last thirty years. It has been the primary focus of US military activity and the region where most US armed service personnel have been killed or injured in forward-deployed areas. So why so little contemporary concerns? The expansion of US nuclear capabilities and satellite-based missile defense programmes during the same period received considerable attention due to a surge in peace movements, especially in Europe. As Elizabeth Gamlen observes, ‘[l]ess widely recognized is the equally dramatic expansion in U.S. conventional capabilities, much of which was directed toward interventionist strategies’, such as those of CENTCOM.<sup>90</sup> Of course, the reason for the lack of attention is arguably two-fold: first, CENTCOM has always projected its protection of US interests in conjunction with the defense of broader Western and global economic health – CENTCOM was defending global capitalism, free markets and a neoliberal order that the Europeans or Japan simply were never going to challenge; and, secondly, an enduring imperial register at the heart of the Western world-view of the Middle East has allowed for an abstracted geopolitical rationale for CENTCOM interventions in regions still beyond the pale – whose histories, whose cultures, and whose citizens simply do not count.

In the late 1970s, the development of the RDJTF concept and subsequent initiation of United States Central Command signalled the beginnings of a new moment of US global ambition that emerged from the ashes of US military defeat in Vietnam and the ‘burden of a sagging military reputation’.<sup>91</sup> CENTCOM’s much-heralded military successes prior to, during, and after the Gulf War, served to banish the Vietnam Syndrome from the lexicon of US policymakers and strategists in Washington, and invigorated a defiant and confident Pentagon, which was augmented further under the current Bush administration. CENTCOM’s long war in the Middle East did not begin on March 19, 2003; it began over twenty years before, and has been sustained by the careful designation of its AOR as a strategic space in the world – a *geo-economic pivot*, vital to global economic health. Since its inception, its strategy has been about closing the gaps of global neoliberal order through military force, and its mission has always been defined by a geo-economic logic that has never been challenged on Capitol Hill, by either the Republicans or Democrats. CENTCOM CINC after CENTCOM CINC affirmed the equation between vital security interests and safeguarding global capitalism in their yearly reports to Congress; their self-defined role being the effective military maintenance of a US-centred global political economy. To this end, CENTCOM CINC’s tailored and directed a theater strategy of forward presence, military deterrence and warfighting; and the ongoing war in Iraq can be read as

the spearhead of US attempts to maintain global hegemony under the auspices of a global war on terror.

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<sup>1</sup> President Jimmy Carter, *State of the Union Address 1980*, Atlanta, GA: Jimmy Carter Library and Museum, <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml>.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, *Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee*, Washington, DC: House Foreign Affairs Committee, 20 February 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Klare, M.T. (2007) 'Beyond the age of petroleum', *The Nation*, November 12: 20.

<sup>4</sup> I provocatively use the Halford Mackinder term *pivot* to indicate the strong echoes of Mackinder at the heart of CENTCOM geopolitical discourse. On this point, see also the work of Gerry Kearns: Kearns, G. (2006) 'Naturalising empire: echoes of Mackinder for the next American century?' *Geopolitics*, 11(1): 74-98; and Kearns, G. (2004) 'The political pivot of geography', *The Geographical Journal*, 170(4): 337-346.

<sup>5</sup> I use the terms *geo-economic* and *geo-economic pivot* less as an exercise in Luttwakian-style *geo-economics* but more as a way to signal the political economy logic of US involvement in the Middle East, which I am arguing has underpinned evolving ideological and geopolitical logics of intervention, especially since the 1970s. Cf.: Luttwak, E.N. (1990) 'From geopolitics to geo-economics: logic of conflict, grammar of commerce', *The National Interest*, 20: 17-23; and Cowen, D. and Smith, N. (forthcoming) 'After geopolitics? Geoeconomics and the territorial politics of security', *Antipode*.

<sup>6</sup> For a coherent reading of the historical trajectory of US involvement in the Middle East after World War II (from the initial *advancement of US naval power* under the Truman Doctrine, through to the *limited war strategy* of the Eisenhower Doctrine, to the *twin pillar regional security policy* of the Nixon Doctrine), see Gold, D. (1988) *America, the Gulf and Israel: CENTCOM (Central Command) and Emerging US Regional Security Policies in the Middle East*, Jerusalem: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, pp. 8-28. See also Painter, D. (1986) *Oil and the American Century: The Political Economy of U.S. Foreign Oil Policy, 1941-1954*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

<sup>7</sup> President of the National Defense Council Foundation, Milton R. Copulos, *Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, Washington, DC: Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 30 March 2006, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*. This point is often forgotten in debates concerning the difficulties the Democrats have faced in contesting the ongoing war in Iraq. Zbigniew Brzezinski, one of the central architects of refocusing US foreign policy on the Middle East in the late 1970s, is now a senior foreign policy advisor to Barack Obama.

<sup>9</sup> President Carter's State of the Union Address in 1980 set out the Carter Doctrine, which explicitly signalled a new US foreign policy of defending by 'any means necessary' the Persian Gulf region.

<sup>10</sup> For example, in Lebanon in 1958.

<sup>11</sup> MacDill Air Force Base, located at the southern tip of the Interbay Peninsula in Tampa Bay, had been proposed for decommissioning in 1960, though only open since 1941. The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Bay of Pigs invasion, however, soon reaffirmed its geostrategic importance.



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<sup>12</sup> *Hearings on Military Posture and HR 9751, Fiscal Year (FY) 1963*, Washington, DC: House Armed Services Committee, p. 3296.

<sup>13</sup> Record, J. (1981) *The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf*, Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis.

<sup>14</sup> Acharya, A. (1986) 'US Strategy in the Persian Gulf: The Rapid Deployment Force as an Instrument of Policy', unpublished thesis, Murdoch University.

<sup>15</sup> Gamlen, E.J. (1993) 'United States strategic policy toward the Middle East: Central Command and the reflagging of Kuwait's tankers', in H. Amirahmadi (ed.) *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Albany: State University of New York, pp. 213-249. The Persian Gulf region was incorporated into US European Command's *Area of Responsibility* in 1972.

<sup>16</sup> Record, J. (1981) *The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf*, Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis.

<sup>17</sup> Brzezinski's memoirs, and contemporary commentaries of influential strategists such as Dr Jeffrey Record at the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis in Washington, are underscored by an anxious masculinity concerned with reasserting *pride* and *global forward presence* in the aftermath of a series of US military failures in the 1970s. See: Brzezinski, Z. (1983) *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981*, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux; and Record, J. (1981) *The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf*, Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis.

<sup>18</sup> US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Military Posture FY 1982*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense.

<sup>19</sup> Gold, D. (1988) *America, the Gulf and Israel: CENTCOM (Central Command) and Emerging US Regional Security Policies in the Middle East*, Jerusalem: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, p. 26.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> President Jimmy Carter (1978) 'Wake Forest Speech', quoted in Gamlen, E.J. (1993) 'United States strategic policy toward the Middle East: Central Command and the reflagging of Kuwait's tankers', in H. Amirahmadi (ed.) *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Albany: State University of New York, p. 218.

<sup>22</sup> Acharya, A. (1986) 'US Strategy in the Persian Gulf: The Rapid Deployment Force as an Instrument of Policy', unpublished thesis, Murdoch University.

<sup>23</sup> RDJTF Headquarters (1981) *Fact Sheet*, MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, FL: Public Affairs Office.

<sup>24</sup> Record, J. (1981) *The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf*, Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, p. vii.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> See Gamlen, E.J. (1993) 'United States strategic policy toward the Middle East: Central Command and the reflagging of Kuwait's tankers', in H. Amirahmadi (ed.) *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Albany: State University of New York, p. 244.

<sup>27</sup> US Congressional Budget Office (1983) *Rapid Deployment Forces: Policy and Budgetary Implications*, Washington, DC: US Congressional Budget Office, p. 4. The renaming of a vast, culturally diverse area, stretching from Central Asia to East Africa, reprised the long-established colonial practice of remapping the world in the interests of empire. *Southwest Asia* in Pentagonese later became known as the *Central Region*.

<sup>28</sup> Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, *Statement before the House Committee on the Budget*, Washington, DC: House Committee on the Budget, 23 September 1981, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> CENTCOM was the 'first new unified command with specific geographic responsibilities to be created in thirty-five years': see Gamlen, E.J. (1993) 'United States strategic policy toward the Middle East: Central Command and the reflagging of Kuwait's tankers', in H. Amirahmadi (ed.) *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Albany: State University of New York, p. 219.

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<sup>30</sup> The original nineteen countries in the CENTCOM AOR were: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, South Yemen and North Yemen. After Yemen's unification in 1990 and Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1991, CENTCOM's AOR remained at nineteen countries until the Seychelles was added in 1996. The five Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were added in 1999 to bring the AOR to twenty-five countries, while, in 2004, the addition of Lebanon and Syria brought that number to twenty-seven, its current AOR. On 1 October 2008, seven CENTCOM countries are scheduled to officially become part of the new Africa Command (AFRICOM) when it reaches *full operational capability*: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia and Sudan (Egypt will be the sole African country to remain in CENTCOM's AOR for long-standing geostrategic reasons).

<sup>31</sup> US CENTCOM, *US CENTCOM History*, <http://www.centcom.mil> (accessed 30 October 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Morrissey, J. (forthcoming) 'War, geopolitics and imaginative geographies', in J. Morrissey, U. Strohmayer, Y. Whelan and B. Yeoh, *Key Concepts in Historical Geography*, London: Sage. See also: Gregory, D. (2004) *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*, Oxford: Blackwell; Melling, P. (1997) 'War and memory in the New World Order', in M. Evans and K. Lunn (eds), *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, Berg, Oxford, pp. 255-267; and Smith, N. (2005) *The Endgame of Globalization*, New York: Routledge.

<sup>33</sup> *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America 2005*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, March 2005, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> See: Said, E. (1997) *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, 2nd edn, London: Vintage; and Shapiro, M.J. (1997) *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

<sup>35</sup> US CENTCOM (1995) *United States Central Command Posture Statement*, MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Office of the Commander-in-Chief, pp. 8-9; US CENTCOM (1997) *United States Central Command Posture Statement*, MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Office of the Commander-in-Chief, pp. 6-8; CENTCOM CINC General Anthony C. Zinni, *Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Posture of United States Central Command*, Washington, DC: Senate Armed Services Committee, 3 March 1998; CENTCOM CINC General Anthony C. Zinni, *Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Posture of United States Central Command*, Washington, DC: Senate Armed Services Committee, 29 February 2000.

<sup>36</sup> Since before World War II, US military personnel had commonly used *CINC* as the shortened version of *Commander-in-Chief* when referring to commanders of unified commands. However, in 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, cited Article II, Section 2 of the US Constitution, which states that the 'President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States', to officially strip commanders of their CINC title and replace it with *Commander*. The CINC title is used here for all references to combatant commanders serving prior to this formal adjustment.

<sup>37</sup> CENTCOM CINC General Anthony C. Zinni, *Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Posture of United States Central Command*, Washington, DC: Senate Armed Services Committee, 13 April 1999.

<sup>38</sup> CENTCOM Commander General John P. Abizaid, *Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Posture of United States Central Command*, Washington, DC: Senate Armed Services Committee, 16 March 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Klare, M.T. (2002) *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict*, New York: Owl Books.

<sup>40</sup> Record, J. (1981) *The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf*, Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, p. 5.

<sup>41</sup> McNaugher, T.L. (1985) *Arms and Oil: U.S. Strategy and the Persian Gulf*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

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- <sup>42</sup> Quoted in Hines, J. (2000) 'From Desert One to Southern Watch: the evolution of U.S. Central Command', *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 24: 44.
- <sup>43</sup> For a critical reading of Arab and Muslim world views of the United States in the post 9/11 period, see Telhami, S. (2002) *The Stakes: America and the Middle East*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- <sup>44</sup> US Congressional Budget Office (1983) *Rapid Deployment Forces: Policy and Budgetary Implications*, Washington, DC: US Congressional Budget Office, p. xiii.
- <sup>45</sup> CENTCOM CINC General George Crist, *Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Posture of United States Central Command*, Washington, DC: Senate Armed Services Committee, 11 March 1986.
- <sup>46</sup> Quoted in Klare, M.T. (2004) *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum*, New York: Owl Books, p. 4.
- <sup>47</sup> Amirahmadi, H. (1993) 'Global restructuring, the Persian Gulf War, and the U.S. quest for world leadership', in H. Amirahmadi (ed.) *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Albany: State University of New York, pp. 363-364.
- <sup>48</sup> Wolfowitz, P.D. (1994) 'Book Review. Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War by Rick Atkinson', *Joint Force Quarterly*, 3: 123.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*: 124.
- <sup>50</sup> Lebanon and Syria were not incorporated into CENTCOM until 2004; Israel and the Occupied Territories remain in the AOR of US European Command.
- <sup>51</sup> For more on this, see Gamlen, E.J. (1993) 'United States strategic policy toward the Middle East: Central Command and the reflagging of Kuwait's tankers', in H. Amirahmadi (ed.) *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Albany: State University of New York, p. 219.
- <sup>52</sup> US Department of Defense, 'Fiscal 2009 Department of Defense budget released', News Release, 4 February 2008, [http://www.defenselink.mil/comptroller/defbudget/fy2009/2009\\_Budget\\_Rollout\\_Release.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/comptroller/defbudget/fy2009/2009_Budget_Rollout_Release.pdf) (accessed 6 February 2008). The combined Defense Department budget has more than doubled in the last ten years; see *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 1999*, Washington, DC: Office of the Undersecretary of Defense, March 1998, pp. 4-13.
- <sup>53</sup> US Department of State, 'International Affairs FY 2009 Budget', Fact Sheet, 4 February 2008, <http://www.state.gov/f/releases/factsheets2008/99981.htm> (accessed 6 February 2008).
- <sup>54</sup> Reveron, D.S. and Gavin, M.D. (2004) 'America's viceroys', in D.S. Reveron (ed.) *America's Viceroys: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 3. The Defense Department proclaims itself as America's oldest, biggest and most flourishing business: 'if you look at us in business terms, many would say we are not only America's largest company, but its busiest and most successful' (DoD 101: An Introductory Overview of the Department of Defense, <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/dod101> – accessed 11 February 2008).
- <sup>55</sup> Quoted in Wrage, S.D. (2004) 'US combatant commander: the man in the middle', in D.S. Reveron (ed.) *America's Viceroys: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 190-191.
- <sup>56</sup> Record, J. (1981) *The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf*, Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, p. 39.
- <sup>57</sup> Wrage, S.D. (2004) 'US combatant commander: the man in the middle', in D.S. Reveron (ed.) *America's Viceroys: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 186.
- <sup>58</sup> Schwarzkopf, N.H. (1992) *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, New York: Bantam Books, p. 271.
- <sup>59</sup> Reveron, D.S. and Gavin, M.D. (2004) 'America's viceroys', in D.S. Reveron (ed.) *America's Viceroys: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 1.
- <sup>60</sup> See the detailed School of Advanced Military Studies monograph by Major Jeffrey Bradford: Bradford, J.A. (2001) *Proconsuls and CINCs from the Roman Republic to the Republic of the United States of America: Lessons for the Pax Americana*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies.

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<sup>61</sup> Robbins, J.S (2004) 'U.S. Central Command: where history is made', in D.S. Reveron (ed.) *America's Viceroy: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 172.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid..

<sup>63</sup> Pelletiere, S.C. and Johnson II, D.V. (1992) *Oil and the New World System: CENTCOM rethinks its Mission*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, pp. v, 26.

<sup>64</sup> It has been argued that CENTCOM forces intervening in Mogadishu in December 1992, as part of the broader UN humanitarian force, also had a geopolitical, military mission from Washington – to take out anti-American warlord, General Mohammed Fareh Aideed, who had ousted the previous US-backed dictator, General Siad Barre.

<sup>65</sup> CENTCOM CINC General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, *Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Posture of United States Central Command*, Washington, DC: Senate Armed Services Committee, 8 February 1990.

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Ian Lesser's 1991 study, *Oil, the Persian Gulf, and Grand Strategy: Contemporary Issues in Historical Perspective*, which was part of a larger RAND project, sponsored by CENTCOM and the Joint Chiefs, on US grand strategy for the Persian Gulf region (Lesser, I.O. (1991) *Oil, the Persian Gulf, and Grand Strategy: Contemporary Issues in Historical Perspective*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation).

<sup>67</sup> Pelletiere, S.C. and Johnson II, D.V. (1992) *Oil and the New World System: CENTCOM rethinks its Mission*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, p. v.

<sup>68</sup> Secretary of Defense William J. Perry (1995) *United States Security Strategy for the Middle East*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Office of International Security Affairs, pp. 5-8. The other components outlined are: protection of U.S. citizens and property; freedom of navigation; successful reform in the former Soviet Union; human rights and democratic development; and access to regional markets – see pp. 8-10.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. ii.

<sup>70</sup> Binford Peay III, J.H. (1995) 'The five pillars of peace in the Central Region', *Joint Force Quarterly*, 9: 32.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid..

<sup>72</sup> See, for example: Energy Information Administration (1996) *Privatization and the Globalization of Energy Markets*, Washington, DC: Department of Energy.

<sup>73</sup> Institute for National Security Studies (1999) *Strategic Assessment 1999*, Washington, DC: Institute for National Security Studies, National Defense University.

<sup>74</sup> US CENTCOM (1997) 'Shaping U.S. Central Command for the 21st Century', *Strategic Plan II, 1997-1999*, MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Office of the Commander-in-Chief, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> US CENTCOM (1995) *United States Central Command Posture Statement*, MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Office of the Commander-in-Chief, p. 1. See pp. 8-9 for an elaboration on the dual focus on oil and access.

<sup>76</sup> CENTCOM CINC General James H. Binford Peay III, 'Promoting peace and stability in the Central Region', *Report to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security*, Washington, DC: House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on National Security, 17 March 1997.

<sup>77</sup> CENTCOM CINC General Anthony C. Zinni, *Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Posture of United States Central Command*, Washington, DC: Senate Armed Services Committee, 3 March 1998.

<sup>78</sup> Secretary of Energy Spencer Graham, *Statement before the House International Relations Committee*, Washington, DC: House International Relations Committee, 20 June 2002.

<sup>79</sup> See Katzman, K. (2006) *The Persian Gulf States: Issues for U.S. Policy, 2006*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, pp. 26-29,

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>82</sup> *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America 2005*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, March 2005, p. 6. With the so-called *global war on terror* focused

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- exclusively on its AOR, CENTCOM was given foremost responsibility for enacting this national defense strategy. For further reflection on the geoeconomic imperative of the global war on terror, see: Dalby, S. (2007) 'Regions, strategies and empire in the global war on terror', *Geopolitics*, 12(4): 586-606; Klein, N. (2007) *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, New York: Metropolitan Books; Martin, R. (2007) *An Empire of Indifference: American War and the Financial Logic of Risk Management*, Durham: Duke University Press; Smith, N. (2005) *The Endgame of Globalization*, New York: Routledge; and Le Billon, P. and El Khatib, F. (2004) 'From free oil to 'freedom oil': terrorism, war and US geopolitics in the Persian Gulf', *Geopolitics*, 9(1): 109-137.
- <sup>83</sup> *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America 2005*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, March 2005, p. 6.
- <sup>84</sup> Morrissey, J. (2003) *Negotiating Colonialism*, London: HGRG, Royal Geographical Society.
- <sup>85</sup> See: Harvey, D. (2005) *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Gregory, D. (2004) *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*, Oxford: Blackwell; and Graham, S. (2005) 'Remember Fallujah: demonising place, constructing atrocity', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23: 1-10.
- <sup>86</sup> US Department of Defense, 'Briefing on coalition post-war reconstruction and stabilization efforts', News Transcript, 12 June 2003, <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/index.aspx?mo=6&yr=2003> (accessed 9 February 2008).
- <sup>87</sup> As urgent as Charles Ferguson's 2007 film, *No End in Sight*, is, in terms of demonstrating the power of President Bush's inner circle in key decision-making after the invasion, and showing the ineptitude of the CPA, he does not, at any point, critique the neoliberal agenda that was prioritized and not so badly served; see Ferguson, C. (2007) *No End in Sight: Iraq's Descent into Chaos* (DVD), Los Angeles: Magnolia Pictures.
- <sup>88</sup> President Jimmy Carter, *State of the Union Address 1980*, Atlanta, GA: Jimmy Carter Library and Museum, <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml> (accessed 12 February 2008).
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid..
- <sup>90</sup> Gamlen, E.J. (1993) 'United States strategic policy toward the Middle East: Central Command and the reflagging of Kuwait's tankers', in H. Amirahmadi (ed.) *The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives*, Albany: State University of New York, p. 220.
- <sup>91</sup> Record, J. (1981) *The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. Military Intervention in the Persian Gulf*, Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, p. 38.
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