Waging Modern War

Wesley K. Clark

Twenty-second Morgenthau Memorial Lecture
on Ethics & Foreign Policy

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Introduction

Imagine a place where the world's most thoughtful and experienced people come together to discuss the moral imperatives of war, peace, and social justice. Imagine that these people convene in the spirit of mutual learning: the philosopher learns from the soldier, the policymaker from the religious leader. Thinkers and doers together reflect on the ethical dilemmas of our times. Andrew Carnegie dreamed of such a place, and with this dream he created the Carnegie Council in 1914.

As we approach the ninetieth anniversary of the Council's founding, we are left with a painful question: how was it that the twentieth century—which began with the promise of mediation, arbitration, and conflict prevention—ended as one of world war, genocide, and ethnic cleansing? That failure, at its most profound level, was a moral one. The challenge for the Carnegie Council today, as at the time of our founding, is to reflect on the moral traditions that help us to analyze mankind's mistakes and to prevent those mistakes from recurring. It is in that spirit—the spirit of moral progress evoked by the memory of Professor Hans Morgenthau, for whom this annual lecture is named—that we gather here today.

Professor Morgenthau (1904-1980) was a towering figure in the field of international relations and in the life of the Carnegie Council. In a recently composed short appreciation, former Council President Robert Myers—who was a student, friend, and colleague of Professor Morgenthau—had the following to say:

> As we approach the 100th anniversary of Professor Morgenthau's birth, we remain in his debt. His classic 1948 book, *Politics Among Nations*, is a forceful reminder of the essential elements of international relations, power, interests, and moral purpose.

The cool logic of Professor Morgenthau's realism advises the proper balance of morality, interest, and power. It advises a realism that guards against crusading self-righteousness on the one hand and nihilistic power politics on the other.

Tonight's speaker, General Wesley Clark, understands this kind of realism very well. In his recently published book, *Waging Modern War*, General Clark writes:

> Just as the Kosovo campaign wasn't won by bombs and bullets alone, neither will we win the campaign on terror exclusively through the use of force. We have to deprive our adversaries of the incentive, the legitimacy, and the hope that they can ever succeed. As Napoleon himself reportedly said, "In war the moral is to the material as three is to one." In our understandable concern to take prompt and effective action, we must not lose sight of the larger, broader, less concrete, but ultimately more important, struggle over human values and beliefs.

The United States is fortunate to have a leader who thinks this way. General Clark is not only a military leader, he is a moral leader. His view of leadership is based on honor, conviction, and action. As he says in his book: "Historically, the United States has enjoyed a solid ethical basis for its power." Accordingly, for him, one of life's greatest gifts has been the opportunity to fight for what is right.

Most of you know General Clark from his frequent appearances as a military analyst for CNN and from his previous position as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. One of America's most highly decorated military officers, General Clark has received multiple Distinguished Service Medals, the Silver Star, Bronze Stars, and the Purple Heart. In addition to his numerous military honors, in August 2000 he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, for his outstanding leadership and service.

General Clark is a West Point graduate and a former Rhodes scholar. In addition to his current role as commentator and contributor to the national public debate, he has opened his own firm, Wesley K. Clark & Associates, in his hometown of Little Rock, Arkansas.

—Joel H. Rosenthal
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Ethics and International Affairs

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Delivered at the Harmonie Club in New York City on May 7, 2003

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Like everybody who studied international relations in the 1950s and 1960s, and perhaps even today, students at West Point read Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations*. Morgenthau was a realist, and there was something about the label itself that those of us in that granite fortress on the Hudson found appealing. He was what we aspired to be ourselves, realists.

I was contemplating Morgenthau's great work in the spring of 1965, just as the United States was deepening its military commitment in Vietnam. The first units had been deployed only to guard the airfields. The Vietnamese Airborne Brigade had been virtually destroyed, and South Vietnam had almost been cut in half. Those of us in my class and the class ahead that was about to graduate had a pretty good idea of what might lie ahead, and we looked for strong and thoughtful men, like Hans Morgenthau, for support.

Except he didn't support us exactly. His book was perplexing. It was disturbing. It was worthy of study and reflection. But we didn't want to think too much. We were readying ourselves for warfare in Vietnam. We weren't particularly reflective about the deeper issues that Morgenthau raised. He presented us with a puzzle—but one set aside by most of us at West Point.

Now we are in a different war. During the last couple of weeks, I have been in Italy, Germany, and Canada. The people I encountered were absolutely awestruck by the picture that has emerged of the American armed forces. This is an incredible military machine. You saw it. You saw the faces of the men and women; you saw the commanders; you saw the dirt, the grit, and the grime. You realized that war isn't just about people with mirrored visors in high-tech cockpits; it is about the day-to-day, hour-to-hour, minute-to-minute experience of danger on the battlefield—danger unforeseen, danger unpredictable, danger that can wreck a life in an instant. And you saw our men and women come through that life-and-death experience in a remarkable way.

This is an armed forces that has been thirty years in the building. Having learned the lessons of Vietnam, the U.S. military has taken advantage of new technology, recruited high-quality men and women, and put together a power and a doctrine that not only makes the country proud but also rewrites military possibilities. We now have an armed forces that can drive American foreign policy.

As my friends abroad have warned me, not since the Roman legions has a single nation been so powerful militarily, so dominant, so able to impose its will—and seemingly without significant cost at home. America's armed forces have cast a long shadow over the nation's traditional alliances. Their power incites envy among potential competitors and fear among potential adversaries; it deserves to be talked about and worried about. It fully justifies the French appraisal of an American hyper-power.

After what I've seen and heard in recent weeks, I am concerned about the emerging communications gap between the United States and the rest of the world. We've got to be careful with our communications. The way we use our armed forces sends a very, very powerful message abroad. It is important, therefore, that we ask ourselves: what does it mean to have armed forces that can engage in an operation like the one just completed in Iraq; what are the implications? But I don't think we can address these questions unless we first ask: how did we get here? We have to go back to the starting point and figure it out.

The Anticlimax of the Cold War Victory

The real starting point is not the birth of Mohammad or the Balfour Declaration founding the state of Israel. The real starting point is 1989, the year we won the Cold War. It's the year we brought those satellite nations out from under the sphere of Soviet domination and discovered that they wanted to be with us in the West. They became democracies. A little more than twenty-four months later, the Soviet Union itself was gone.

People of my generation, especially those of us who served in uniform, just couldn't believe that the Cold War was over. For our entire adult lives, we had expected that Europe would be divided and the free world would live under the threat of a surprise attack by the Soviet Union that would bring us to the brink of destruction. Then suddenly, the Cold War was over, and the Soviet Union was gone for good. We had won.

But in our moment of triumph, which we celebrated only quietly at a few military bases around the country, we recognized that for all we had won we had also lost. We had lost our foreign policy strategy and a sense of America's purpose in the world. For forty years, we had adhered to a policy of deterrence and a strategy of containment: our entire foreign policy was geared toward preventing war while containing the expansion of the Soviet Union. America knew that it was going to be engaged—no more appeasement, no more withdrawal. We were out there; we had a mission.

Republicans and Democrats didn't always agree on strategy. For the Democrats it was more about, "Gee, fellows, let's get together and talk about this, and maybe sign some agreements." For the Republicans—particularly those who fancied themselves, perhaps inappropriately, of the Morgenthau school—it was a matter of: "Hey, let's be hardheaded about this; let's be tough. We need more forces. We need to make sure nobody out there thinks they can push us around." Nevertheless, at the core of American foreign policy was a bipartisan consensus, which, except at the margins, was beyond debate.

With the winning of the Cold War, we lost that consensus and entered a period of great disorientation. At the time, I was a division commander at Fort Hood, Texas, in command of the First Calvary Division. I had 17,000 troops, some 600 Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles, eighteen Apache helicopters, artillery, rockets, and fifty-three horses—that's why we called it the First Calvary Division. It was a great command.

Our division was recovering from Operation Desert Storm. We were preparing for contingency operations in the Middle East—even though none of us expected it. President George H. Bush had said there was a new world order in play, and Francis Fukuyama, the great Harvard historian, had written a book saying it was the end of history.

Then I received the offer of a promotion to lieutenant general and a new assignment, if I would come to Washington and accept a job as director of strategic plans and policy for the Joint Staff. Now I knew there would never be anything as wonderful as riding that horse around wearing a big, black Stetson with crossed sabers. I left with regret and no small amount of trepidation.

When I got to Washington, I was given three thick binders full of acronyms and problems. It wasn't a new world order exactly, if by that you meant a problem-free international environment. My assignment was to look at strategic military planning, at the political-military interface. That meant going to White House meetings; sitting in the back row in the Situation Room while the Chairman and Secretary of Defense talked; carrying back the information and reporting it to the Defense Department staff; and coordinating our plans, policies, and activities with staff at the State Department and the National Security Council.

It was a great learning opportunity and full of surprises.

Lurching From One Foreign Policy Crisis to the Next

On my third day in Washington (April 1994), the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were killed. Three days later, I was leaving the office on my first Friday night, looking forward to the weekend, when someone said, "The French and Belgians have invaded Rwanda. There is fighting in the streets of Kigali."

"What's this all about?" I asked. "Get me a map." We rounded up people before they left the building, and someone produced a map. Somebody else said, "Sir, this is a tribal conflict. We haven't had time

to brief you on it, but there are these two groups called the Hutus and the Tutsis. No, wait a minute, let me go check that. It may be the Tutus and the Hutsis." Confusion reigned, and there were some wild phone calls. We called the U.S. European Command. Nobody knew anything about it. (It was being carried on CNN, of course.) Finally, we talked to the Belgian and French embassies and got some explanations. It was my first Friday night—and my first all-nighter—on the job.

The following morning, I went to a meeting with Secretary of Defense William Perry in his office. We were preparing for a trip to Korea. The matter was of some urgency because as it turned out, the United States was on the brink of going to war with North Korea. It seemed likely that the North Koreans had a couple of atomic weapons, and President Clinton had said he could not permit this on the Korean Peninsula. He had even threatened to take the matter to the United Nations and ask for sanctions. The North Koreans responded that they would consider this an act of war. Our commander said, "If they say it's an act of war, they probably mean it; therefore, I've got to have more troops in Korea." But the Pentagon warned that if we reinforce South Korea, the North Koreans will view this as war preparations. We were in the midst of a true *Guns of August* scenario.

On Sunday, as I recall, I was summoned to a special meeting at the White House. I sat in the back row of the Situation Room and watched as the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the National Security Advisor talked about an undeclared air war over Yugoslavia. I was waiting for the high-level policy discussions to begin. Instead, they were talking like a group of fighter pilots:

> We'll take the planes here, and if this plane comes this way, and if he then turns this way and has his radar off and he's got a 30° cone out the front, and then if the radar illuminates the radar detector on our aircraft—is that a hostile threat or at least a hostile intent meaning

we can then engage him?

But what if the radar is on the ground?

Well, there's two modes if the radar is on the ground: there's a target acquisition mode and a target tracking mode.

But also, isn't one a high power and one a low power? Don't you get a final third kind of radar when the missile locks on?

It went on like this for two or three hours. The strange thing was, nobody at the meeting had ever seen a Soviet-built, Soviet-designed SAM-6 system; yet there we all were, debating air-to-air tactics and the rules of engagement. I left feeling totally mystified. That was a moment when many of us realized that the United States had entered a new world.

On Monday—this was actually my seventh day on the job—a guy came into my office, sort of tugged on my sleeve, and said, "Sir, I'm not supposed to tell you this, as you're not cleared with a need to know; but since I'm working for you, I want you to know that there's a secret war plan being developed to invade Haiti."

"We're going to invade Haiti?" I asked. "I want to see the plan."

"Sir, you're not cleared to see this. Please, don't tell them I told you about it."

So this was the new world order. I watched over the next few weeks as various events unfolded: a near-war with North Korea, an undeclared war in the skies over the former Yugoslavia, a problem with refugees and immigration—with people taking to the seas in anything that would float and some of them dying trying to reach Florida—that would lead to our invasion of Haiti.

I watched as Canadian General Roméo Dallaire, locked up in a soccer stadium with 1,000 African troops and 100 UN communicators, was ordered to stand by as 800,000 people were hacked to death by machete in Rwanda—hacked to death by priests, neighbors, school teachers, and by police who were there to protect them—while begging

for their lives. The United States, meantime, was examining UN contingency plans. We were still arguing back and forth about war plans when the French intervened, and we finally went in to deliver relief supplies.

In Search of a Strategy

A few weeks into my tour, General John Shalikashvili called me in and said, "Wes, you have been in this job for a while now, you have been to Korea, you have seen all these problems. We hired you because you're supposed to be so smart. You are a strategist. So tell me, what is the strategy?" It was a trick question, because there wasn't a strategy—at least, I didn't have one. We were lurching from event to event, trying to manage crises.

So Shali told me, "Go write the strategy." I worked on this assignment with National Security Advisor Tony Lake and others within the State and Defense Departments. My staff and I worked on the military part, while Lake and his team addressed the broader political issues. But we could not find any consensus on what ought to be happening.

We searched for ideas from Democrats and Republicans on the Hill and their staffers, and from thinkers based at the Heritage Foundation, Brookings, and the American Enterprise Institute; we also wrote to the war colleges. We asked all of them to tell us: "What is the U.S. strategy? Is it deterrence, compellence, or engagement?"

We uncovered one approach favored mostly by Republicans, which essentially said: "Look, the purpose of the American armed forces is very simple: to fight and win America's wars. You no longer have a Soviet Union; you've finished off Saddam Hussein, or nearly so; and if the need for an American military presence ever arises, you can send the troops back." People in this camp really wanted the American troops to come home. "Those Europeans," they said, "they never pay their freight anyway; they're always dumping their burden off on us. Why should we keep so many troops in Germany?"

On the other side was an approach epitomized by Madeleine Albright and her famous question to Colin Powell: "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?" People on this side, mostly Democrats, were suggesting that American troops could engage in humanitarian efforts. "Why don't we use our troops to do de-mining, to go and save those children in Angola who are getting their arms and legs blown off from landmines? Why don't you deliver relief supplies to the starving refugees from Rwanda? Why don't you stop the war in Bosnia that has killed 150,000 people and made another 2 million homeless?"

The only real area of agreement between the two camps was that both wanted a peace dividend after the Cold War; both agreed the armed forces were too large and had signed on to a reduction, beginning in 1991 under President George H. Bush. This notion pervaded until 1996, when we finally stopped the continuing drawdown that had taken away 30 to 35 percent of the strength and the resources our armed forces had at the end of the Cold War.

We never did engineer that comprehensive, comprehensible, publicly supported strategy to take the place of deterrence and containment. Tony Lake and his team wrote a great pamphlet that talked about engagement and enlargement. And my staff and I produced the National Military Strategy. These two documents were the closest we ever got to developing a national security strategy. Technically, they filled the bill, but our ideas never captured the attention of the American people. They, as well as their representatives in Congress, continued to see things through their own lenses.

It wasn't that the American troops were idle. We delivered relief supplies to Rwanda. We invaded Haiti. We sent 15,000 troops back to the Persian Gulf in October of 1994. You probably don't remember it, but Saddam moved his troops and prepared to re-invade Kuwait—in fact, he sent the same divisions from the same Republican Guards back to the same assembly areas they had occupied in July 1990. We

couldn't believe it. We pre-emptively mobilized and deployed, and after a couple of weeks Saddam backed off and we tightened up the no-fly zone, moving it from 32° to 33° north.

After an agonizing spring in 1995 and some tough fighting in the early summer, President Clinton decided that rather than send in 20,000 American troops in a NATO mission to rescue the UN Protection Forces in Bosnia, we may as well try to get a peace agreement using the 20,000 American troops as the bona fides of the American commitment.

I had the incredible experience of accompanying Richard Holbrooke on that mission. After three months of shuttle diplomacy and talks at Dayton, we secured a peace agreement, and the United States committed 20,000 troops on the ground in Bosnia. We succeeded in stopping that war, and it hasn't resumed since.

In the summer of 1998, we watched anxiously as yet another round of fighting commenced in Yugoslavia, this time in Kosovo. We tried coercive diplomacy to stop it because we knew that NATO's future, as well as the performance of the mission in Bosnia, was at risk.

Our embassies were hit in Africa by Osama bin Laden. We struck back at his camps in Afghanistan.

Saddam Hussein was still denying that he had weapons of mass destruction. We put pressure on him; and when that didn't work and the inspectors didn't go back in and we couldn't get an agreement, we launched four days of very intensive strikes, called Operation Desert Fox, in December of 1998.

We were active all right, and we were busy. It's just that we never had bipartisan consensus on a foreign policy strategy, nor did we have the support of the American people.

Kosovo: An Unsung Victory

Finally, in March of 1999, after a year of fruitless diplomacy and efforts to head off the fourth conflict in Yugoslavia, NATO entered the con-

flict. It was a seventy-eight-day air campaign—in essence, it was war. We launched with 350 aircraft, going up to almost 1,000; we began with fifty-one targets, ending up with several hundred. During the seventy-eight days, there were 35,000 sorties and 23,000 bombs and missiles. The campaign saw the first use of the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber, the first use of the Predator in combat, and the first use of the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM).

By the end of that time, not only had we built up our air forces, we had put 30,000 NATO troops on the ground, including a 5,000-strong U.S. brigade-sized detachment in Albania with a corps headquarters—including an Apache helicopter battalion, tanks, artillery, and rocket launchers. We had another corps headquarters and more troops in Macedonia.

We were also committed to moving ahead with a ground operation if Slobodan Milosevic didn't give in. We had isolated Milosevic by getting Bulgaria and Romania to close their borders to Serbia. And we had told the Russians what was going to happen. They apparently told Milosevic not to expect too much assistance as they just weren't capable of it.

On the seventy-ninth day, Milosevic caved in. He gave in to all of NATO's demands. He pulled out all of his forces: military, police, and paramilitary. The 500,000 Albanians who had been living in the hills came back to their homes; 900,000 refugees who had fled the country came back in—the largest spontaneous refugee return since World War II. Some 40,000 NATO forces occupied this province of Yugoslavia.

It was an incredible victory—not only for NATO but for the principle of humanitarian intervention and for the principle of acting with force to right a wrong. NATO nations should have celebrated that victory, but they didn't. Because they couldn't call it a war, they couldn't call it a victory. And the joyous throngs in the streets of Pristina passed virtually unnoticed in the American media.

We moved on with the peacekeeping operations, the task at hand,

under the stern guidance of the Republican-controlled Congress, insisting that we seek an "exit strategy" and avoid "mission creep."

I remember during that time how proud I was of the American armed forces. But I also remember when I came back to the United States in the summer immediately following the conflict, many people didn't even know that our forces had been engaged, that there had been a fight.

Americans were wrapped up in themselves during that period. My friends from other countries—from South America or Europe—would come to the United States to visit New York or Chicago or Houston, and they'd report back: "Oh, we loved your country. It was just wonderful. People were incredibly friendly—they'd help us in the stores, and some even invited us to their homes for dinner or a barbecue." But then they would add: "It was a strange thing. We watched your news. We never saw any news about foreign affairs. It was all about what was happening in your country. We never saw any news about our country at all. And when we talked to people, they'd ask us where we were from, and they didn't know the country; they couldn't find it on a map; they didn't know its capital; they didn't know its politics; they didn't know who its president was. We know about your country, we know about your president; but you don't know anything about ours. We know about you because you matter to us. We must not matter to you very much."

They had the feeling we were self-absorbed—and maybe we were. We were in the middle of the greatest peacetime economic expansion in American history. We were proving to the world that the best emerging market was not in Malaysia but in the United States of America. That's where you got not only the safest return on your investment but the greatest return on your investment. We were absorbed in living the good life.

When I was getting out of the army in the summer of 2000, I stood on the parade field at Fort Meyer, Virginia. My family was there, as

were a bunch of my West Point classmates and army friends, with whom I'd served for years. Every four-star does this: you get the parade and the bands marching back and forth, and then they put your last medals on and you make your last speech and say good-bye.

I was watching the troops and thinking, "What a great armed forces." I mean, I was with these people in Vietnam when it was a draftee force. I was in the Army when so many others had resigned and left the service. I was there when the military was one of the least-respected institutions in the United States.

We built that force back up. We put in new equipment, new training, new techniques, and new technology; but most importantly, we put in a new way of developing human potential so that each and every person in uniform could be all they could be. Looking at those soldiers passing back and forth, I felt really proud to have been associated with that effort and with those men and women.

I was also excited about getting out because I had determined I was going to be an investment banker and do my best to emulate George Soros. I had seen what he could do with giving away a few hundred million a year in Europe and had been impressed. In my fondest dreams, I thought that maybe I could make enough money to give it away and make a difference—and that this would be a worthy thing to do. I was excited about becoming a civilian and having the freedom to try new things.

Reality Bites: Security Post-9/11

This was the absolute apex of power and influence for America as we knew it, the summer of 2000. Shortly after getting out of the army, I met with a famous Washington publisher. "You know, Wes," he told me, "when I was growing up, we always had generals and admirals around our table, and people were always talking about the Soviet threat and how to keep the country safe. The military is not important any more, not in the way that it was. It's a shame, really."

Now all that is changed, especially here in New York, because here, like no place else in the country, people understand that when you are talking about national security you are also talking about personal security. It's a much different country today.

We're now in Afghanistan. We've taken care of the Taliban. We have almost 10,000 troops over there plus 4,500 peacekeepers. We're still fighting. Hamid Karzai is still in charge in Kabul. The warlords are still in charge in the provinces, selling drugs and dealing weapons and blandishments. That Marshall Plan that was promised a year or so ago—it hasn't shown up yet.

We're now in Iraq with 130,000 U.S. troops and maybe 20,000 British troops, with more coming. Some people said it would take 200,000 to stabilize the country. Well, we didn't put 200,000 troops in there. We showed them. It seems that the plan is to divide Iraq into three sections—give the Poles the north, the British the south, and the Americans the area around Baghdad—and then to take the number of troops down to about a division or so by autumn. We need to get our forces back so that they can ready themselves for the next challenge. As President Bush has told us—and he said it again in his victory declaration—Iraq wasn't a war but just one battle in the continuing war on terrorism. We've got more challenges ahead.

By the way, there is also a great investment program for Iraq: $79 billion has been appropriated to make Iraq a model of democracy for the world.

So that's where we're coming from and where we are today. The question remains: what next?

I would suggest that the first thing to understand about the war on terror is that it is not enough to take down states. Within a few days after the 9/11 attacks, the decision was taken to go after Saddam Hussein, regardless of whether he was actually involved in the incident. There may have been many good reasons for that; and I don't dispute that it certainly sent an object lesson to the world: that the United States

has armed forces capable of taking down whole countries.

On the other hand, we should understand that this capability alone will not win the war on terror, because the problem with the war on terror is that terrorists are here in the West, in countries that you can't take down. We are not going to attack Germany; we are not even going to attack France, as angry as people are at the French. Both France and Germany are our allies in the war on terror, along with Spain and Italy.

I was in the Pentagon about three months ago, getting one of the unclassified briefings they give to CNN military commentators. Displayed on one of the walls was a chart that showed problem countries in the war on terror. Now you would expect to see Pakistan, Yemen, Kashmir, Nepal, Indonesia, and the Philippines. No, no, no. It was Germany and Spain, our NATO allies. Why? Because their intelligence services are fragmented and their laws aren't up to the task.

It's not about military force if you want to win the war on terror. That's the easy part. It is about the harmonization of laws; it's about agreeing on what terrorism is and having a clearinghouse to get the laws governing terrorist acts standardized across countries, so that the international environment for prosecuting terrorist crimes is seamless. And it's about agreeing on the elements of proof, the standards of admissibility for evidence. If a country has conducted a wiretap that yields substantial proof of engagement in a terrorist cell, they should be able to hand that information to another country for use in court. We're not there yet.

We know that some 3,000 people have been arrested around the world for engaging with al-Qaeda or other terrorist organizations. What we don't know is how many of them were subsequently released. The best I can figure is on the order of between 70 to 80 percent, because the necessary harmonization of the laws has not yet occurred.

Why don't we use NATO for this? Why can't the ambassadors to NATO orchestrate not only the military strategy but also the pursuit of justice across borders, including criminal investigations, information-

sharing, and security clearances? NATO should become an alliance that can help us win the war on terror.

When I was in the middle of the Kosovo campaign, Tony Blair came over to see me in my office. It was an unannounced visit.

"I just want to ask you a single question," he said.

"Can I give you a cup of tea?"

"No."

"I've got this great briefing here on the air campaign, Prime Minister. I'd love to—"

"No briefing," he said. "I just want to ask one question."

"Yes, sir?"

He was sitting on my couch, sort of crunched down, with his elbows on his knees and those bright blue eyes gazing at me, a young man—at that time, he didn't have much gray hair—and a very smart man.

"I just want to ask you one question: are you going to win?" he asked.

"Yes, Prime Minister, we're going to win."

"No, no, stop. I'm seriously asking this question. I want to know: are you going to win?"

I wasn't quite sure where he was coming from. I remembered that a couple of weeks earlier there had been an op-ed in the *Daily Telegraph* written by my good friend John Keegan, the eminent British historian, whom I had invited to my battalion twenty years earlier at Fort Carson, Colorado, to talk about his book *The Face of Battle*. Now Keegan had written in the *Daily Telegraph*, "It seems like NATO needed a new supreme commander in the midst of war because, well, Clark is a nice young man, he's very smart, and all that; but he just isn't enough like Norm Schwarzkopf to be a good commander."

I thought for a few seconds and said, "Prime Minister, I have never lost anything significant in my life, and I am not going to lose this one."

He stared back at me for about thirty seconds, and then he said, "Okay, good, because every government in Western Europe depends on

the successful outcome of this operation."

I knew right then that Tony Blair would support the war effort. He was committed. It wasn't just America's war on Slobodan Milosevic; it was also Britain's war on Slobodan Milosevic.

Still in Search of a Strategy

We don't have that unity of purpose quite yet in the war on terror. During the summer 2002 elections in Germany, the issue wasn't which government was going to best protect Germany from terrorism. It should have been. The French elections that put Jacques Chirac back in for another seven years weren't about which party is going to best protect France from terrorism. They should have been.

We need NATO. We need an alliance. We need to get European countries inside our camp, into the same boat, realizing that our war is their war. If Hans Morgenthau were here today, that is the first thing he would say about American strategy concerning the war on terror.

The second thing we've got to do, of course, is to look at our domestic scene. Our government has done a remarkable job post-9/11. There has not been another terrorist incident at all in this country, excluding that gunman who opened fire near the El Al counter in Los Angeles a year or so ago—but he wasn't connected to organized terrorism as far as we know.

We've got the FBI and CIA working together better than they have ever worked before. We have strengthened airport security—you're not going to get a nail file, much less a weapon, on most of our airplanes, most of the time.

That said, this country hasn't really scratched the surface on homeland security. We haven't fixed the ports; we haven't fixed the borders; we haven't used modern information technology to help us identify the patterns and the signatures of real terrorist activity before it happens.

We've created the Homeland Security Department, but it's still in the throes of the bureaucratic reorganization this entailed. The Office

of Management and Budget (OMB) put the damper on spending more money on homeland security when the budget came in last summer. There was another stall last October, when OMB said no expenditures until March. We've got American private enterprise trying to secure the safety of our country, but we're having a challenging time moving forward. There's a lot more work that needs to be done.

The bottom line is, we've got to get our strategy right. It's not just about military forces, and it's not just about attacking states, and it's not just about being on the offensive. It's about working together with other nations in police and law enforcement activities. It's about taking care of security here at home.

There's also the broader picture to consider. The fact is, the United States represents only about 5 percent of the world's population but is using 25 percent of its consumable resources. If Hans Morgenthau were here today, he would tell you that politics among nations is a function of human nature itself. And when you have lands in which people are impoverished, humiliated, resentful, angry, and ignorant, you're providing the ideal culture in which the seeds of terrorism will grow and come back against us again and again. We have to face up to this reality.

In closing, I would like to propose developing a strategy that addresses three main questions:

1. When do we use force? Under the threat of terrorism, with fear spreading throughout America, we went on to cast a shadow across the entire world with our doctrine of preemption. Our allies abroad still want to know the precise criteria that justify our use of force. They're very happy for Saddam Hussein to be expelled; but when it comes to threatening to use force, they want to know what confers legitimacy on U.S. actions. We have yet to answer that question to their satisfaction; but if we're going to put together a strategy that brings this country together and moves us forward in a comprehensive way, we have to do that.

2. What should we do about the UN and NATO? One of the justifications for going after Saddam Hussein was that the United Nations couldn't survive if people were allowed to violate UN Security Council resolutions with impunity. It is high time to revisit the situation with the UN and decide how to confer on it greater legitimacy. For instance, we ought to ask why Syria is in charge of disarmament, and Cuba is about to become in charge of human rights. We need to establish the kind of conditions that will justify the UN's actions in the eyes of the American people, so that the UN can function more effectively, as envisioned by our own leaders a half-century ago. And, as already mentioned, we should consider giving NATO a mission to help fight the war on terrorism rather than relegating it to the periphery, because we need to get our allies deeply involved in this action.

3. How do we make our way ahead in the world? Hans Morgenthau understood that we had to be very careful with the grand moral visions that tempt all nations. He understood that we had to beware of the "triumphalist" instinct. He understood that the power of states is constrained and transitory. If he were here today, I think he would say: "Be careful where that incredible military is taking you as you employ it in the war on terror. Be careful of the great visions and the moralistic hopes." Instead, we need to work pragmatically on the problems we are facing today such as the challenges of North Korea's nuclear program and the continuing bloodshed in the Middle East. We need to work on our real interests and avoid the siren song of moral crusades.

And Morgenthau would tell us one more thing. He would warn us to walk softly, with humility, even though we are now the world's lone superpower. That would be good advice for this country in the days ahead.

Thank you very much.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: You painted a very convincing picture of America's problems. What can we do in 2004 to find a leader who will help solve those problems?

WESLEY CLARK: Right now we should be talking about ideas, not candidacies. We've got to get the American people engaged in a dialogue: What does this country stand for; what do we want to be remembered for; how do we want to be viewed abroad; what's going to make us safer at home; what are the right actions, policies?

Incidentally, one of the most serious charges you can level against any man or woman is that they might have presidential aspirations. It's a guaranteed discreditor from serious dialogue. That's an unfortunate commentary on the state of discussion in the United States today, but it has been my observation since leaving the military three years ago.

We ought to be talking about starting up a dialogue. We ought to be challenging the people in office and those who seek it: "Give us the ideas; show us the way; give us the vision; don't dole it out crisis by crisis; tell us where we're going and why; tell us the purpose of our government's actions." That dialogue is not here yet.

Going back to the record on Iraq: as early as October 2001 it was clear to me that the United States would invade Iraq. I knew this was why Vice President Cheney went to the Middle East last spring. But I didn't hear anyone discussing it. Chris Matthews, an MSNBC announcer, came to me in June of last year and asked, "Do you think we're going to invade Iraq?"

I said, "I certainly do."

"Well, I've been trying to get people interested in it, and no one's paying any attention."

Senator Joe Biden held hearings last summer, and as I recall, there

wasn't a spokesperson or witness from the Bush administration who would testify. The president, on vacation in Crawford, Texas, said, "What's all this hubbub about Iraq? What's the rush? I'm a patient man." I can't remember Secretary Rumsfeld's comments, but they were along the same lines. Then, two weeks later, Vice President Cheney said, "We've got to hurry and do something about Saddam before there's a mushroom cloud over America," or words to that effect.

We need a dialogue that helps this country formulate a new strategic conception of itself in the world. How do we take advantage of this tremendous opening of trade, communications, technology, travel, and immigration that brought us so much prosperity in the 1990s? How do we take advantage of it but at the same time mitigate the risks? We need a strategy. We don't have one yet. And as much as I love the American armed forces, they are only a part of the solution. They are no substitute for a vision of what America will be in the future.

QUESTION: You alluded to the notion of "mission creep," which was a criticism of you when you were running NATO. Would you comment on the new book by Dana Priest, *The Mission*, where our armed forces are depicted as so incredibly powerful that they seem to be beyond criticism because they are identified with patriotism. According to Priest, the temptation is to use a military solution even if it's not a solution at all but creates a new problem.

WESLEY CLARK: Dana Priest has done the most comprehensive job of anyone yet in laying out exactly what our armed forces are truly engaged in—and it is staggering. Our armed forces are already driving American foreign policy. They are the "last resort" problem solver for this country abroad. We have no other action agency. We don't have an agency for international development in the sense that there isn't anything like what Bob Komer put together for Vietnam, called Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support. This agency

really did modernize and change the economy of South Vietnam dramatically, even during the course of the war. We don't have anything like that today.

What we do have are military units that venture out on a mission to maintain order—and then end up tracking down the troublemakers and doing police-type investigatory work. Meantime, none of the important work—the development of a political structure, the creation of an effective judicial code, the ability to train judges to implement that code, the creation of a prison system to confine perpetrators or violators of the criminal code, the ability to handle property disputes that have simmered for years—is being addressed, and it cannot be addressed by men and women in uniform. That's not their job; that's not their training. It takes them way beyond the bounds of their competency, much less authority. So who should be doing it?

One of the key issues is this problem of nation building. You can't duck it by calling it a dirty word and saying you're not going to do it. It has to be done. The failure of states to meet the needs of their citizens can lead to conflict, both internally and externally. Thus we have to help rescue these states—not out of altruism, not simply because it's right, but because it's in our very real interest to do so.

I hope we will find out who is actually responsible for putting that Marshall Plan in place in Afghanistan. I'm pretty sure it's not the Secretary of Defense—he doesn't do economic development. If it's the State Department—well, they're interested in foreign policy, but they're not an action agency in the sense of having a trained cadre of civil engineers, not to mention lines of funding and accountability and perk charts. That kind of work isn't handled by Colin Powell's office, at least not to my knowledge. And although Colin is a remarkable guy, there's only so much any one person can do.

I think you need a Cabinet-level official to help move this process forward, at least on a temporary basis, someone who can take over all the strands of authority and say, "Look here, Afghanistan (or Iraq) is

my problem, not the military's problem. They're working for me here."

Until we get that, we're going to continue to encounter the kinds of problems that Dana Priest cited in her book, and we'll continue to see the resurgence of the Taliban and al-Qaeda in places like Afghanistan, and the entrance of al-Qaeda recruiters and Shi'ite fundamentalist recruiters into places like Iraq.

QUESTION: General Clark, you raised a question in both your last answer and in the course of your presentation about the strategic policy of the American government, which you say was not formulated years ago and still isn't formulated now. Strategically, what do you think is the right direction for American foreign policy?

WESLEY CLARK: The first thing you should do is have a dialogue with the American public to try to bring them back on board. We have lost the American people out somewhere in the hinterlands, in places like Kansas and Arkansas and Mississippi. To them, there is something nasty about the term "mission creep." We've got to bring them through this learning process and make them aware that they are living in a changed world. If we don't get the information out to the public first, we'll never be able to set in place the policy that needs to emerge.

Then we need to work with our representatives in the House and in the Senate. We need to put together the right agencies of government to deal with the problem of failed states. That is at least 30 percent of the problem.

Next we need to take the terrorist issue and make sure we are responding to it not only with military strikes, law enforcement measures, and reprisals but also with an understanding of Islam. Once we know what's motivating the terrorists, and can perceive the sources of the terrorist education, we should be able to take preventive measures to stem the flow of funds from Saudi Arabia to the *madrassas* [Islamic religious schools]; change the curriculum in the *madrassas*; and work

against the folks in Pakistan who are opposing General Musharraf and feeding the terrorist threat in Kashmir and elsewhere. So we need a broader set of policies to deal with terrorism.

Third, and as I mentioned in my presentation, we need to step back again and look at our international institutions and where we want the world to be in thirty and fifty years. What we have to do is continue to formulate a code of behavior for states.

Yes, weapons of mass destruction do change the nature of the threat because it is no longer just a state but a band of individuals that can wreak enormous damage on another country. That means you've got to have closer cooperation between and among states.

But such cooperation cannot be imposed from without. No matter how powerful our military, we don't have unlimited power, and especially not unlimited staying power. It has to be arrived at on the basis of consensus; and the place to begin that consensus is by working with other like-minded democracies. We urgently need to sit down and talk to them.

President Bush has put an extremely big chip on the table: it's the United States armed forces, which can go anywhere, any time, and attack anyone who is a challenger or a potential challenger to the United States. If I were another country, I would be quite concerned about that—and they are. I would also be willing to listen and dialogue with the United States intensively about this—and they are. But we need to do our part in laying out the framework for that dialogue.

How do we take the United Nations and NATO to the next level of dealing with threats in the international environment? Those organizations were set up to resolve disputes among nations, but this is no longer enough to provide security. You've got to go deeper into the fabric of each nation, making sure they are fulfilling their responsibilities to the rest of the world by controlling the behavior of errant citizens and limiting the damage they might do abroad. Countries should all be working together on that goal and on sharing information coopera-

tively. If we do that, maybe we can reduce our reliance on the military in this process.

So these are three elements of strategy. And that strategy must then be linked with the economic piece, the environmental piece, and all the other elements that govern our intercourse with other nations; and then it's got to be understood by the American people. We are not there yet. A lot of labor still needs to go into creating a comprehensive plan.

QUESTION: I think it was John Adams who once said that America was going to be the next superpower but the real question was what kind of superpower it would be as opposed to the kind Great Britain was. Your presentation gave an inspiring answer to that question. I would like to know what you think about current efforts in Europe to develop an independent defense mechanism or an independent defense force, and what the status of that effort is right now?

WESLEY CLARK: Europe has been talking about having an independent defense force for a decade, and the United States has always been threatened by this.

No matter how the Europeans broach the matter, it always chills policymakers in Washington—they spend many hours reading dry diplomatic cables trying to figure out what is really meant. In the end, almost nothing comes of it except ill feelings, because the defense ministers in Europe today are not defense ministers: they are assistant finance ministers in charge of the defense portfolio, taking their orders, in accordance with the Maastricht Treaty, from the minister of finance. The minister of finance doesn't care about the Quai d'Orsay and its aversion to belonging to NATO. "There's only so much money that's available and you're not getting it," he says.

There was an informal meeting last week, and the American participants reported to me they were basically deceived by their European counterparts, each of whom had individually agreed with Washington

that nothing would come from this meeting—only to issue a join pronouncement calling for more headquarters, more planners, and more redundancy within NATO, with a sort of tinge of anti-Americanism to it. On the other hand, we've seen it before. Not one Euro-cent will go to support that defense.

Both sides of the Atlantic should put their hard feelings aside and start working together, because the simple truth is that America's greatest friends and greatest supporters are in Europe. Together we are 700 million people, depending on where you draw the boundary with Eastern Europe. Together we've got three of the five permanent votes in the UN Security Council. Together we're producing half the world's GDP, and we're also the greatest investors in each other's countries. We share a cultural heritage and have mutual languages. Together we can shape the world and make it safe for ourselves and our children.

If we remain apart—driven by some faulty notion of multi-polarity or a sense of anger and betrayal coupled with a "get even" spirit—we're going to kill the goose that laid the golden egg, that brought fifty years of peace and prosperity and stability to the United States and Western Europe. Let's not give up our successful defense alliance.

Appendix

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Wesley Clark discusses the nature of modern air war as exemplified by the NATO-led attack on Kosovo, for which he served as supreme commander. This new kind of warfare, though effective, raises certain ethical questions. Can the United States justify placing non-combatants at higher risk by conducting high-altitude bombings in order to limit its own casualties? Does modern air war fit the demands of "non-combatant immunity" as currently conceived, or does our thinking need to evolve on this?

2. Wesley Clark says that the Department of Defense should not be relying primarily on military solutions to potential conflicts. But doesn't the nature of modern weaponry—and the widespread belief that technology enables us to wage clean and quick wars—encourage greater reliance on a militarized strategy? In the case of Iraq, for instance, some argued that a military campaign would take fewer lives than another ten years of sanctions, thus would be more humane.

3. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called for a new century that recognizes human rights as a higher priority than the sovereignty of nations. This, however, does not necessarily reflect the majority opinion in the UN Security Council or the General Assembly. General Clark, for example, did not have UN support for his campaign against Kosovo on behalf of humanitarian aims, an intervention which, because it never received the authorization of the Security Council, violated the sovereignty rights of the former Republic of Yugoslavia. Should the United States engage in so-called humanitarian interventions without the consent of the UN if necessary? Are there different standards for interventions justified on grounds of national security than for those conducted primarily for humanitarian purposes?

4. Wesley Clark argues that the war on terror cannot be won by military means alone, or even primarily, and that the United States needs to cooperate—especially with its European allies—in "police and law enforcement activities." He goes so far as to suggest that the existing institutional framework of NATO be strengthened to enhance the necessary cooperation. But Clark's relatively optimistic outlook on the future U.S.-European relations contradicts what other recent commentators have said. For instance, Robert Kagan asserts that America's rift with Europe is quite profound as many Europeans feel they are now "beyond war." How deep is the current split between the United States and some of its oldest European allies, and what are its underlying causes? Is NATO an adequate institution to take up the task of mending the transatlantic rift, and if not, what are the alternatives?

5. Wesley Clark provides a firsthand account of Washington's "crisis management" approach to foreign policy, something that is still true nowadays, he says. To what extent does this ad hoc style reflect the realities of the U.S. political system? Do partisanship and other political considerations prevent the military from charting a steady strategic course when engaged overseas? Can today's security challenges be met by a coherent strategy, or are they so diverse that they necessitate ad hoc "crisis management"? If the latter, is there any way to shield the military leadership from the requirement of having to navigate difficult political waters, responding to one crisis at a time?

KEY TERMS

> CLARK: We asked all of them to tell us: "What is the U.S. strategy? Is it **deterrence, compellence**, or **engagement?**" (p.15)

Deterrence: A policy aimed at convincing an adversary that the costs of military aggression will far outweigh its benefits, thereby deterring or dissuading that adversary from seeking to achieve their aims militarily.

Compellence: A policy aimed at compelling an adversary to act in a certain way by intimidation, the threat of force, or ultimately the use of force.

Engagement: A policy where a state actively pursues relations with another state or group of states on an economic, cultural, societal, or military level, either in an informal or an institutionalized framework. (In an economic context, this might range from negotiating bilateral trade agreements to supporting another state's admission into the World Trade Organization.) Proponents of engagement hold that a state can influence another state's behavior more effectively by engaging the state rather than strictly opposing it diplomatically and/or militarily. "Engagement" is often used with qualifiers such as "limited" or "selective."

> CLARK: We moved on with the peacekeeping operations, the task at hand, under the stern guidance of the Republican-controlled Congress, insisting that we seek an "**exit strategy**" and avoid "**mission creep.**" (p. 18–19)

Exit strategy: A term originating in finance (referring to an investor's plans for closing out an investment) that is now often used in reference to military interventions. The first major use came in with the

Weinberger Doctrine in the second Reagan administration. The term was picked up again by those who opposed President Bush's decision to throw Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. They demanded to know, once that UN object was achieved: "What is your exit strategy?" Beginning with the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia in 1993, having an exit strategy became a kind of prerequisite for humanitarian intervention. In 1996 then-national security advisor Anthony Lake drafted an "exit strategy doctrine" stating that it had to be clear how American troops are going to leave a country before they are sent in.

Mission creep: A byword for a lack of defined goals. Originating in military circles, the term refers to an expansion of the original, limited military mission under pressure of unfolding events to encompass new and more difficult tasks—especially those traditionally not in the realm of military operations. The term began to be used with reference to foreign policy aims during the humanitarian operations of the 1990s, when the Clinton administration stood accused of involving the U.S. armed forces in non-military—humanitarian or "nation-building"—tasks. Examples from that era include the U.S. intervention in Somalia in 1992, the UN intervention in Bosnia in 1993, and the 1994 U.S. intervention in Haiti. More recently, the term was used to refer to the allied forces' attack on Afghanistan, when critics warned that a Vietnam-style civil war could ensue unless the American leadership could stop their mission from creeping into other areas.

> CLARK: [Hans Morgenthau] understood that we had to beware of the "**triumphalist**" **instinct.** He understood that the power of states is constrained and transitory. (p. 26)

"Triumphalist" instinct: The tendency of nations to believe that their style of governance is superior to all others. Clark references Morgenthau here because of the latter's insistence that we need to

guard against the hubris that occurs when powerful states forget that their power, no matter how great, always has its limits and that power relations are in flux. Morgenthau perceived a grave danger in the situation where a powerful state attempts to achieve overambitious goals in a blind belief that power always leads to triumph, especially when aiming to realize grand moral visions on a global scale.

> CLARK: Our armed forces are already driving foreign policy. They are the **"last resort" problem solver** for this country abroad. We have no other action agency. (p. 28)

"Last resort" problem solver: An approach that views the military as the ultimate solution to a foreign policy problem should other methods fail or be deemed inadequate.

> CLARK: One of the key issues is this problem of **nation building.** You can't duck it by calling it a dirty word and saying you're not going to do it because it has to be done. (p. 29)

Nation building: Post-conflict reconstruction of a state, ideally on institutional, societal, and economic levels. The goal is to "create" an autonomous sovereign state.

Note: A number of the above definitions were derived from Cathal J. Nolan's *Greenwood Encyclopedia* (2002 edition).

RESOURCES

Books mentioned in the course of the dialogue with Wesley Clark:

- *Politics Among Nations*, by Hans Morgenthau

- *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*, by Samantha Power
- *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military*, by Dana Priest

*Related speech transcripts available at **www.carnegiecouncil.org**:*

- "From a Reporter's Notebook: Afghanistan One Year Later: The Struggle for the Soul of a Nation," by Ahmed Rashid
- "The New Killing Fields: Massacre and the Politics of Intervention," by Michael Walzer and Peter Maass
- "Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda," by Romeo Dallaire
- "Of Paradise and Power: America vs. Europe in the New World Order," by Robert Kagan
- "A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis," by David Rieff
- "At War with Ourselves: Why America Is Squandering Its Chance to Build a Better World," by Michael Hirsh
- "Six Nightmares: Real Threats in a Dangerous World and How America Can Meet Them," by Anthony Lake

Other relevant Carnegie Council resources:

- "Beyond Coalitions of the Willing: Assessing U.S. Multilateralism," by Stewart Patrick, in *Ethics & International Affairs* 17.1 (Spring 2003)
- *Human Rights Dialogue* 2.5 (Spring 2001): Human Rights in Times of Conflict: Humanitarian Intervention
- *Just Intervention*, edited by Anthony F. Lang, Jr. (Georgetown University Press, forthcoming 2003)

About the Speaker

General Wesley K. Clark retired as one of the nation's most highly decorated military officers since General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

His military leadership experiences have taken him from Vietnam to Latin America. He ultimately rose to the position of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, commanding all NATO forces to success in the important and controversial Kosovo conflict without a single Allied casualty. He has been a leader in developing international military and security strategy in Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa, as well as one of the technology pioneers who helped guide the U.S. Army into the digital age.

Clark can frequently be seen on CNN as a military analyst providing expert commentary on the war on terrorism and American foreign policy. He is the author of *Waging Modern War*, which recounts his experience leading NATO's forces in Kosovo.

Clark recently opened his own firm, Wesley K. Clark & Associates, based in Little Rock, Arkansas. He serves on the board of directors of Messer-Greisheim, Acxiom Corporation, and SIRVA Corporation. His nonprofit activities include serving as a trustee of the International Crisis Group, as a board member of the National Endowment for Democracy, and as district senior advisor to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

Clark graduated first in his class at the United States Military Academy at West Point. He holds a Master's degree in philosophy, politics and economics from Oxford University, where he studied as a Rhodes scholar.